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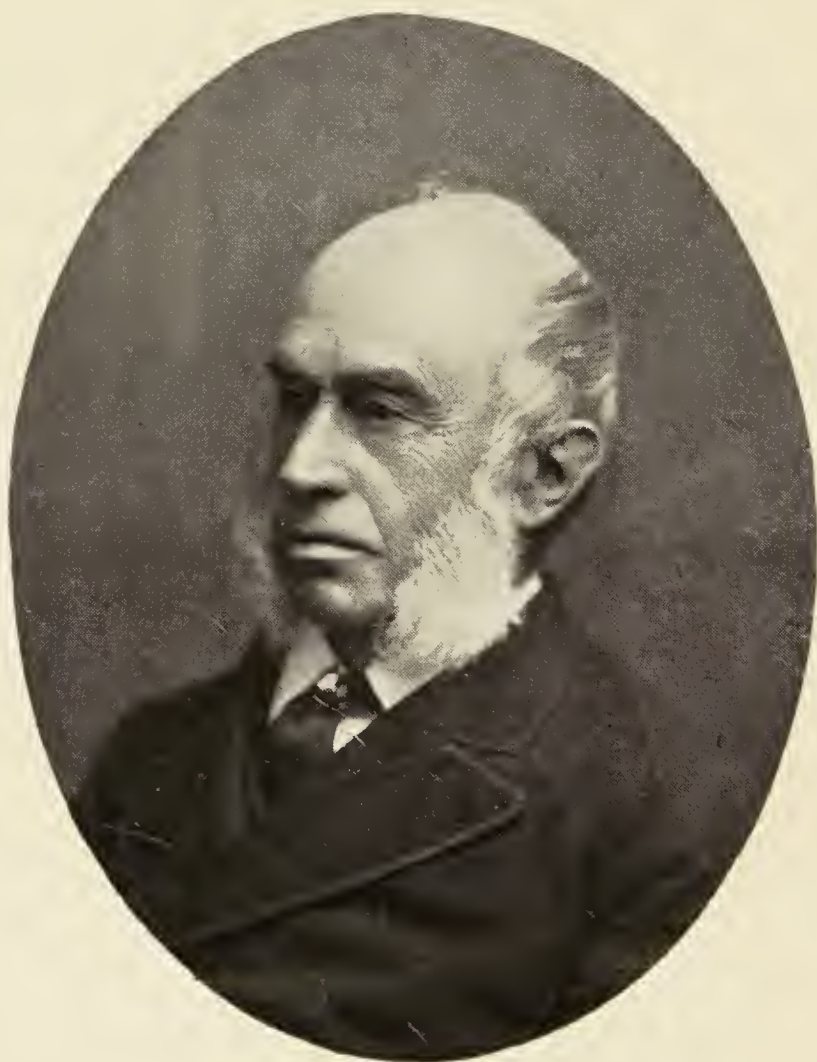
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*Mr Rathbone*









# POOR LAW CONFERENCES

HELD IN THE YEAR

1898-99.

Proceedings of the Central and District Poor Law Conferences,  
held from April 1898 to February 1899, with the  
Papers read and Discussion thereon, and  
Report of the Central Committee,

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LONDON:  
P. S. KING & SON,  
ORCHARD HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.  
1899.

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MR WILLIAM RATHBONE.



## Mr William Rathbone.

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AT a time when the subject of Nursing in Workhouses is receiving an unusual degree of attention—and that this is so is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that the present volume contains no fewer than six papers upon it—some notice of the pioneer in this branch of administrative reform will doubtless be acceptable.

It is now just thirty-five years ago that the Guardians of the Parish of Liverpool received a letter simply signed “A Liverpool Man,” in which the writer offered to bear for three years at his own cost the additional expense involved in the substitution, in the Hospital of the Parish Workhouse, of properly qualified and trained nurses for the untrained female officers who, with pauper assistants, were at that time charged with the care of the sick in the Hospital Wards. The name of the writer was not generally known, but as the Board received satisfactory assurance that the offer was made in good faith, and that there could be no question as to the writer’s ability to carry out his undertaking, the offer was, after due consideration, accepted—to the extent, at least, of the nursing of one-half of the Hospital. Shortly afterwards arrangements were made for the transfer from the Nightingale Training School for Nurses of a Superintendent and twelve fully trained Hospital nurses, and these, with eighteen probationers, thenceforward had charge of the Men’s Side of the Hospital. After an experience of two years of the working of the system



on the Men's Side, the Women's Wards were placed on a similar footing, and from that date (1867) the whole of the Hospital has been nursed by trained and skilled nurses at the cost of the rates; the cost during the experimental stage—amounting to £2,400—having been borne by the anonymous donor. It was not long before the example thus set was followed in other districts, and the supervision of pauper nurses by nurses with full Hospital training has since been effected in most, if not all, of the Metropolitan Workhouses, and in many of the larger Workhouses in the provinces. That the reform has not been universal is unfortunately too true.

The anonymity of the "Liverpool Man" was not long preserved, for it soon became known that he was the gentleman whose name is prefixed to this notice.

Mr William Rathbone was born in Liverpool in 1819, of a family which had been closely connected with the town since the early part of the last century. In accordance with what had for several generations been a family custom, he, as the eldest son, took the name of "William," and thus became the seventh holder of the name in direct descent. His father had, for many years before the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act (1835), occupied a leading position in the town, and he was the First Mayor elected by the reformed Corporation. His public services are commemorated by a portrait which hangs in the Town Hall, and by a statue erected in the principal park belonging to the city; and there are still thousands of his fellow-townsmen who hold his memory in affectionate remembrance.

The subject of the present sketch received his education in Liverpool and Heidelberg, and after some commercial experience in London and the United States, joined the family firm of Rathbone Brothers, merchants and shipowners, of which on his father's retirement he became the head. Foremost in every



movement calculated to benefit his native town, and a liberal—often a munificent—supporter of all well considered efforts for promoting the welfare of his less fortunate brethren, he has fully maintained the family characteristics of free-handed, but wisely discriminating, generosity, and a lofty sense of civic responsibility. It would be impossible within the limits of this sketch to enumerate the local reforms with which he has been connected, and in the carrying out of which he has taken a leading part, but the following may be instanced:—The establishment of a District Nursing Organisation, with a well-equipped Home for Nurses; the rebuilding and endowment of the Royal Infirmary; the formation of a Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society, by the consolidation of three independent charitable societies; and the rescue from poverty and pauperism of hundreds of respectable families by transferring them to districts where the labour of the several members could be turned to good account.\*

In 1867, Mr Rathbone accepted a seat upon the Board of Guardians, and he has since, when not engaged in the discharge of other public duties, been most regular in his attendance at its meetings—taking especial interest in the work of the Relief Committees. He is a firm believer in the soundness and the wisdom of the conclusions arrived at by the Poor Law Commission of 1834, and at his suggestion the report of the Commissioners was a few years since reprinted for general circulation.

In the following year (1868) Mr Rathbone was returned to the House of Commons as one of the members for Liverpool, and he retained his seat until 1874, when, at the request of his party, he made an

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\* Particulars relating to some of these movements are given in a work by Mr Rathbone, published in 1867, "Social Duties, Considered with Reference to the Organisation of Effort in Works of Benevolence and Public Utility, by a Man of Business." Macmillan & Co.

effort to secure for the Liberals one of the seats for South-West Lancashire. In this attempt he was not successful; but a few months afterwards he was returned at the head of the poll at a bye-election for Carnarvonshire, and remained the representative for that district until his final retirement from Parliament in 1895. Whilst a member of the House of Commons he gave special attention to all questions relating to Local Government, to the Licensing Laws, to Elementary Education, and to all matters affecting the trade and commerce of the country, on all of which he was admitted to be an authority. He was not a frequent speaker, but when he did address the House he never failed to secure respectful attention. Incidents of his Parliamentary career which may be here mentioned are the sending out at his cost of a Commission to report as to the Elberfeld System of Poor Relief, and at a later date another to report upon the Licensing System of the United States.\* In 1877 he and Mr S. Whitbread circulated two elaborate memoranda on Local Government in England, written for them by Mr R. S. Wright (now Mr Justice Wright). Politically he is a Liberal, and whilst in Parliament was a supporter of Mr Gladstone.

No notice of Mr Rathbone would be complete without some mention of the part he has taken in the establishment of the Liverpool University College, and of the University of North Wales. Himself a liberal contributor to the funds, he by his influence and example was largely instrumental in securing the gratifying success which marked the birth and the subsequent growth of these foundations, and he no doubt owes the position he fills as the Vice-President of the governing bodies of these institutions to the recognition of the part he took in bringing them into existence.

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\* "Liquor Legislation in the United States and Canada." By W. Rathbone and E. L. Fanshaw, 1893.

He is now engaged in promoting the reconstruction and extension of the Liverpool Consumption Hospital, and the widening of the sphere of the operations and strengthening the financial position of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Nursing Fund for the extension of District Nursing.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, he still takes an active interest in public work, and his list of engagements often extends to a formidable length. A marked trait in his character is his indomitable perseverance. Let him once be assured that the cause is good and the end worth striving for, he discards the word "impossible" from his vocabulary, and obstacles and difficulties are to him but as calls for more strenuous efforts. A key to his career is furnished by an observation which fell from him a few weeks ago—"I do not wish to live a day longer than I can be of service to others."

Mr Rathbone is a D.L. and J.P. of the county of Lancaster, an Honorary Freeman of Liverpool, and an LL.D. of the Victoria University.

H. J. HAGGER.

LIVERPOOL, *February* 1899.



## South Midland District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

POOR LAW CONFERENCE FOR THE SOUTH MIDLAND  
DISTRICT, HELD AT THE WORKMEN'S HALL,  
BRAND STREET, HITCHIN, ON FRIDAY, 29TH  
APRIL 1898.

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*President*—ABEL H. SMITH, Esq., M.P., *Chairman*  
*of the Hertford Union.*

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference :—

BRIXWORTH—

Rev. W. Bury.  
Rev. Dr J. C. Cox.  
Mr F. C. Jeyes.

EDMONTON—

Rev. J. Botterell.  
Mr William Peart.  
Mr J. T. Tongue.

ELY—

Mr A. J. Pell.

HERTFORD—

Mr A. L. Ashwell.  
Mr F. T. Newman.

HITCHIN—

Mr B. A. Charlesworth.  
Mr L. W. Denman.

HITCHIN, *continued*—

Mr William Hill.  
Mr G. A. Passingham.  
Mrs F. A. Wright.

NORTHAMPTON—

Mr W. Fawkes.  
Mr A. Orton.

OXFORD—

Councillor J. H. Darwood.

PETERBORO'.

Mr H. Little.  
Mr T. Ratcliff.

WARE—

Rev. F. W. Greenstreet.  
Rev. P. E. S. Holland.

### VISITORS.

Mr J. W. Preston, Local Government Board Inspector.  
Mrs B. A. Charlesworth.  
Mrs A. J. Pell.  
Mr W. Chance.



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## FRIDAY, 29TH APRIL.

Rev. Canon BURY presided at the morning sitting. He said that the first business was the election of three representatives on the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences. Mr Ashurst had not been very regular in his attendance at the meetings, and if Mr Little, who took a keen interest in Poor Law work, would act, he (the Chairman) would propose him in place of Mr Ashurst.

The name of the Rev. Dr Cox (Chairman, Brixworth) was proposed and seconded; and on a division, eight members voted for Dr Cox and two for Mr Little. The remaining representatives were re-elected, viz., Mr Pell and Mr Sperling. The representatives on the Central Committee are thus:—

Rev. Dr Cox,  
Mr Albert Pell, LL.D., Haselbeach, Northampton; and  
Mr Arthur Sperling, Lattenbury Hall, St Ives.

The Honorary Secretary, Mr Albert Julian Pell, Wilburton Manor, Ely, was unanimously re-elected to that position.

The next business was the election of a Committee for the South Midland District.

The CHAIRMAN stated that Mr Peile, who had left Bedfordshire and was now residing in Hampshire, desired to have his name removed from the Committee.

The Hon. Sec. proposed that Miss Pym, of Bedford, be appointed in succession to Mr Peile.

The CHAIRMAN said that unfortunately Miss Pym was not now a Guardian.

It was decided to invite the Bedford Board of Guardians to nominate one of their members for the position on the Conference Committee.

The following were re-elected on the Committee:—

Bucks	-	-	-	-	Mr Treadwell.
Cambs	-	-	-	-	„ Sperling.
Herts	-	-	-	-	„ Holland.
Hunts	-	-	-	-	„ Rust.
Northants	-	-	-	-	The Rev. Canon Bury.
Oxford	-	-	-	-	Mr Ashurst.



Rev. James Botterell (Grove Villa, Wood Green, N.), Chairman of the Edmonton Board of Guardians, was elected the representative of Middlesex.

The next item on the Agenda was "Reading and Discussion of Papers," but

The CHAIRMAN said that he understood that one of those present that day, Dr Cox, intended to move a resolution, notice of which was undoubtedly given at the previous Conference at Cambridge, but which the Hon Sec. did not treat as a formal notice of motion, and which therefore was not on the paper of that day's business. Dr Cox would perhaps have a just cause of complaint if, after having given notice of motion, he was ruled out of order because it did not happen to be on the Agenda paper. On the other hand, they all knew that another subject raised in that way, without previously appearing on the Agenda paper, was apt to be very unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the mover might be the only person who was prepared to speak on the subject. He would leave it to the meeting, after hearing Dr Cox, whether they thought it was expedient to take a vote on the matter at such a small meeting.

Rev. Dr Cox said he would be as brief as he could. When the Cambridge Conference discussed the well-worn subject of the rules of relief, the opinion of the meeting seemed to be fairly unanimous in a certain direction, and as he felt pretty strongly on the matter he desired to move a simple resolution. Mr Darwin, son of the celebrated Dr Darwin, and Mayor of Cambridge, who was in the chair, was disposed to accept a motion, but the Hon. Secretary of the Conference said it was contrary to the precedent of the Conference. He (Dr Cox) reminded the Hon. Secretary that he had been at other Poor Law Conferences at which resolutions were moved. Some of his friends suggested that he should move the adjournment of Conference, but he preferred to give notice of motion there and then, so that at the present Conference (1898), they might decide whether or not resolutions should be allowed in future at the South Midland District Conferences. He maintained that they should have resolutions, and what had happened during the past year had confirmed him in that opinion. He asked Dr Rhodes as to the practice in the North of England, and that gentleman assured him that he did not remember one of the North-Western District Conferences at which there were no resolutions. He had also searched a complete set of Reports of Poor Law Conferences, and he had found that there were resolutions at the South Midland District Conference in 1876 (the first meeting) at Northampton; in 1877 at Oxford; in 1878 at Bedford; (in 1879 and 1880 he could not find any record of a meeting at all); in 1881 at Aylesbury; in 1882 at Huntingdon; in 1883 at Hitchin; in 1884 at Peterborough; (in 1885, at Oxford, there were no resolutions); in 1886 at Luton; (in 1887 and 1888 there were apparently no meetings; and in 1889 no resolutions); and in 1890 at Northampton. From that year to the present there were no resolutions reported.

The present Hon. Secretary, Mr Pell, accepted office in 1894, and was therefore quite right in saying, that within his knowledge, there had been no resolutions allowed at the South Midland Conference, although the records showed that at nine out of fifteen reported meetings motions were made and discussed. The complete volume of Reports of Poor Law Conferences held during the past twelve months (Messrs P. S. KING & SON, WESTMINSTER) showed that a number of resolutions were passed (see pp. 736-738 of the Official Report of the Poor Law Conferences, 1897-98). There was no rule and no precedent against resolutions, and, therefore, if the Chairman would leave it to the discretion of that meeting whether any resolution should be passed during the day, he was inclined to leave the matter there, having made this statement, as he did not think the difficulty would arise again. It seemed to him that Conferences were more likely to be well attended if there was a means of testing the opinion of those present. However, if the Hon. Secretary of the Conference still held that resolutions were out of order, he (Dr Cox) would move that, in future, resolutions should be permitted at the South Midland Conferences. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Secretary of the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences) said that he thought he could throw a good deal of light on the question. First of all, it was not quite the fact to say that there were no Conferences where resolutions were not moved. The South-Eastern Poor Law Conference Committee used to have resolutions, but they had now decided against them in consequence of the amount of time they took up. The South-Western Conference also did not allow resolutions, though the North-Western, the West Midland, and some other Conferences admitted them. As a rule it was decided by the Committee of each Conference, and it entirely depended upon this meeting to say whether there should be resolutions in future or not. He would just add that they had a thorough discussion on the question in his own Committee (South-Eastern), and they were of opinion that it was very unfair to spring upon a meeting a resolution which had not been considered beforehand, and which, perhaps, did not accurately represent the feeling of a district. His Committee felt strongly that a resolution had very little weight unless it had had the fullest previous consideration. (Hear, hear.)

Dr Cox: Then I move that we had better adhere to the old principle of accepting resolutions. Out of fifteen meetings officially reported, nine——

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot have a second speech.

Mr LITTLE (Peterborough) said that without resolutions the members had nothing to report to their respective Boards beyond their own individual opinions. It was most important to have resolutions, and nothing could possibly result from the Conferences unless they did have resolutions. He seconded the motion made by Dr Cox.



The HON. SECRETARY (Mr Pell) said the Conference was much indebted to Dr Cox for looking into the question as to what was done in previous years. Dr Cox confirmed the statement he (the Hon. Secretary) made at the Cambridge Conference, that no resolution had been moved during his connection with the South Midland Conference. There was no rule against resolutions being proposed at the South Midland Conference. The Committee had very little to do, and it had not formulated any rules of procedure. As to the desirability of allowing resolutions, he was entirely in accord with Mr Chance, who said that there would be very little time left for the discussion of subjects on the agenda; and, further, a difficulty arose as to who were to be allowed to vote. Were they going to allow all present to vote, or only Delegates from the Boards in the Conference District? In the South Midland District there were sixty-four Unions, but he had only received applications for tickets for delegates from six Unions.

Mr LITTLE (Peterborough) asked whether proper notice of the Conference were given to all those Unions.

The HON. SECRETARY said that proper notice was given to all of them.

Mr LITTLE said then, as a matter of business, the absentees must be bound by the expressed opinions of those who took the trouble to attend. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN said that he would personally prefer resolutions being put, as they added so much to the life of a meeting, but when he considered the reasons for which he attended a Poor Law Conference, he was against Dr Cox's suggestion. A Conference really meant that they were to confer together and exchange opinions, and endeavour to get at the truth of the matters discussed, and to benefit by the experience of others. It would be foreign rather to the idea of a Conference if they turned it into a debating meeting, where angry passions would be aroused, and differences accentuated, where they would begin to take sides, and taking sides almost always meant taking political sides, as to which he would only say they could not touch pitch without being defiled. (Laughter.) For those reasons he was against the resolution. Mr Cox was a celebrated antiquarian, and had gone back a long way to prove his case, but he (the Chairman) preferred to remain content with the experience of the last thirteen years at the Conference, during which resolutions had not been accepted. He moved as an amendment that the consideration of the question be deferred to the next Conference, and that notice of Dr Cox's motion be put on the agenda accordingly.

Rev. J. BOTTERELL (Edmonton) and other members urged that the matter should be disposed of at once.

Dr Cox said he could not see his way to accept the Chairman's amendment. There would not be any lame resolutions sprung upon the meeting if they had a Chairman worth his salt. He had not the faintest idea of moving any resolution that day, but any

resolution germane to the subject of the papers should be accepted. He had not found that resolutions led to political discussions. He did not want to hold out any threat, but he knew that his own and other Boards objected to send delegates simply because there was no means of testing the opinions of the Conference.

On a division 4 voted for the amendment, and 15 for the original proposition.

Dr Cox's motion was accordingly carried.

The following paper was then read :—

## THE CAUSES OF PAUPERISM AND ITS PREVENTION.

BY MR W. CHANCE,

*Hon. Sec. Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences.*

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I HAVE often noticed that in discussions at Conferences such as this, the distinction between the state of pauperism and the state of poverty is not always kept in mind. I think Dr Chalmers gave a correct definition when he described the state of poverty as "that state in which the occupier is unable of himself to uphold the average subsistence of his family," and the state of pauperism as "that state in which the occupier has the ability, either entirely or in part, made up to him out of a public and constitutional fund."

### A POOR LAW : A CAUSE.

The first cause, then, of pauperism is the existence of a Poor Law. Did no Poor Law exist, there would undoubtedly be *poverty*, but there could be no *pauperism*. A very interesting paper, although it would be rather of an academic character, might be written, showing how much better off the country would be without a Poor Law, but I am not going to write it. If my paper is to be of any practical use, I must assume that a Poor Law *is* necessary, and I shall try to point to some of the causes which bring the poor to resort to it, and to what extent those causes may be removed.

LAX ADMINISTRATION OF RELIEF, AND ESPECIALLY  
OF OUTDOOR RELIEF : A CAUSE.

To my mind, the main cause of pauperism is the facility with which, in a large number of Unions, relief from the rates can be obtained. A curious distinction is made between relief inside the Workhouse and relief outside it. The one is looked upon as a disgrace to the recipient, and the other not. I must say that it seems to me that they are both equally an evil, and an evil which the poor should be induced to make every effort to avoid. Unfortunately, many of those who call themselves the friends of the poor actually *invite* them to apply for relief, and assert it to be their *right* to have relief in the form in which they prefer to take it. That there is a *right* to relief under our English Poor Law I cannot deny, but that right only exists where *destitution* can be proved, and Guardians will be doing their best to reduce pauperism by letting it be known that they have an institution where the destitution can be adequately relieved, and that they are always ready to receive the destitute inside its walls. The Workhouse should be made the test of destitution much more than is done at present. The Bradfield Union (Berkshire) has been trotted out so often as an example of the value of this method of reducing pauperism (on the 1st January last there were only 131 indoor and outdoor paupers in a population of over 18,000—census of 1891), that I will do no more than refer to it. It was also up to two years ago usual to refer to the Brixworth Union as another example of what could be done by the same means to reduce pauperism without increasing poverty. But Brixworth has fallen from its high estate, and one can only mourn over its strange relapse.

Fortunately, there are plenty of other Unions which can show an extraordinary reduction of pauperism, owing to their resorting to the "Workhouse test" more freely than they did some twenty-five years ago. I will take



as examples a few Unions (or parishes, or incorporations) of different kinds, classifying them according to their density of population in 1891 (the census year). It may be accepted as an almost universal truth that the greatest poverty exists where the population is densest, and my figures are intended to show that pauperism and poverty have no necessary connection with each other. Indeed the excuses made by Guardians for the pauperism of their Unions show this most amusingly.

“We are purely agricultural here,” says one chairman. “We have no towns or factories where work can be had ; our population has to trust exclusively to field work, and find it very difficult to lay anything by.” On the other hand, another chairman will say: “We are peculiarly situated. We have several large factories in our Union, which give employment to a considerable number of hands, who come upon us directly they are out of work, owing to sickness or other temporary causes.”

Or again one will say, “We have no large employers here to give extra employment ;” while another will make the excuse, “We have several large proprietors in our Union, and we find that their charity does much to increase dependence on relief.”

Well, here are my figures. They exclude numbers of lunatics and vagrants.

Union or Parish.	Year.	Population.	Pauperism on 1st January.			Density of Population for every 10 Acres.	Ratio of Paupers to every 1,000 of Population.	Decrease in Number of Paupers.
			Indoor Paupers.	Outdoor Paupers.	Total Paupers.			
Whitechapel (London)	1871 1897	76,332 73,954	1,188 1,317	3,325 58	4,513 1,375	1,950	59 19	3,138 or 69 per cent.
St George's in the East (London)	1871 1897	48,235 45,795	1,219 979	3,285 81	4,504 1,060	1,900	93 23	3,444 or 76 per cent.
Stepney (London)	1871 1897	57,578 57,376	931 1,359	2,648 142	3,579 1,401	1,230	62 21	2,178 or 60 per cent.
Paddington (London)	1871 1897	96,784 117,846	530 1,009	1,995 237	2,525 1,246	940	26 10	1,279 or 50 per cent.
Manchester (Lancashire)	1871 1897	173,965 145,000	3,082 3,439	7,479 677	10,561 4,116	880	61 28	6,445 or 61 per cent.
Birmingham (Warwickshire)	1871 1897	230,946 245,503	1,731 2,388	7,317 943	9,048 3,331	830	39 14	5,717 or 63 per cent.
Oxford (Oxon)	1871 1897	21,015 21,813	288 276	570 52	858 328	140	48 15	530 or 61 per cent.
Faversham (Kent)	1871 1897	22,388 25,770	329 247	890 164	1,219 411	6	55 16	808 or 66 per cent.
Cleobury Mortimer (Salop)	1871 1897	8,317 8,163	86 64	326 58	412 122	1.4	49 15	290 or 70 per cent.



Here you see such different Unions as the densely populated city of Birmingham, the small city of Oxford, the "residential" Union of Faversham, and the purely rural Union of Cleobury Mortimer, with almost identically the same ratio of pauperism at the present time.

Now compare these ratios with that of the South Midland counties (excluding the city of Oxford) at the same date. You will find the ratio of pauperism per 1,000 of population in those counties (on the census of 1891) to be 28, or the same as that of such a densely populated city as Manchester. There is evidently plenty of room for reduction of pauperism in the South Midland counties, and undoubtedly a more careful administration of relief would very soon effect it. The Guardians of this district ought not to rest content until they have reduced pauperism to half what it now is, and I say emphatically that this can be done.

I call the lax administration of relief the main cause of pauperism, because it has so much to do with two other causes of pauperism, such as the neglect to provide for the usual accidents of life, and the abuse of drink.

#### ABSENCE OF THRIFT AND PROVIDENCE: A CAUSE.

I have not the least doubt that it is within the power of the very large majority of the wage-earners of this country to provide for the ordinary accidents of life, including old age. That the number who could do so would be very largely increased had we no Poor Law to corrupt them, or if it was very carefully administered, is as certain as anything can be. A study of the statistics of any two Unions in which the economic conditions are similar, but in which the administration of the Poor Law is different, will show how little dependent the amount of pauperism is upon the rate of wages.

In a paper which I read three years ago at one of

these Conferences (Oxford, 1894), I showed how a man joining a good club (such as the Foresters) at eighteen years of age could insure for ordinary sickness, old age, and death, for from 6d. to 7½d. a week, according as his contributions for an old-age pension were non-returnable or returnable. The facilities for women insuring for similar benefits have not been so great, but I am glad to think that the number of female branches of sound friendly societies is increasing. But for some years past both women and children have been given the opportunity of insuring themselves against ordinary illnesses by the establishment of provident dispensaries or medical aid societies.

A lax administration of poor relief is discouraging to thrift and providence of any kind. The Poor Law comes to be looked upon in the light of a club, and is used as such. Indeed, we often hear it said—I have no doubt we shall hear it said again this morning—that the payment of rates is in the nature of an insurance. Of course it is nothing of the kind, but if payment of rates were held to give any right to relief, the Guardians would be perfectly justified in confirming that right by an order of admission to the Workhouse. However, I am afraid that the people who use the argument mean that the payment of rates gives a right to *outdoor* relief. If that idea were to obtain largely, I should despair of the condition of the working classes of England being ever bettered.

#### ABUSE OF DRINK : A CAUSE.

Into this part of my subject I cannot enter at length. The drink question has become a political one. But that the abuse of drink is one of the main causes of pauperism no one would, I should think, deny. Many working men, not necessarily drunkards, think nothing of spending a considerable portion of their weekly wages on alcoholic liquor. Two shillings out of a wage of one pound would be considered very moderate.

Yet if they were asked to spend that amount in insuring themselves and their families they would probably reply, "It is too much, we cannot do it out of such a wage." I do not look myself to legislation to effect the cure. But here again lax administration of outdoor relief is an encouragement to intemperance. In one of our Poor Law papers I read the other day the following :—

"Many outdoor paupers sell their loaves instead of eating them, and the money after goes straight away to the public-house. An instance is recorded at Lincoln. A gentleman had occasion to visit the house of some poor people, and found the man and wife partly drunk, and they informed him it was 'relief day, and we have just had a little too much.' Furthermore, that it was no business of the Guardians how the money should be spent. A Lincoln Guardian says the public-houses are never so crowded as on relief day."

I can quite believe this. So that here again, while we rightly regard abuse of drink as a cause of pauperism, we find that it is often the result of the ill-advised grant of outdoor relief.

#### ABUSE OF CHARITY : A CAUSE.

It cannot, I think, be questioned that charity carelessly bestowed is also a cause of pauperism. If proof of this were wanted, I need only point to cities and towns with numerous endowed charities. You will find such places extremely pauperised. Oxford City afforded an example until comparatively recently. But for some time the endowed charities there have been taken in hand. They are no longer administered in doles, and are used to a large extent in providing adequate pensions for deserving old people. The charitable dole system is almost as injurious in its effects as the out-relief dole system. If these charities (which have a united income of more than a million pounds a year) ceased to be used for "dole" purposes, they would



go far to provide adequate pensions for all deserving old people, and the old-age pension question would be settled. As administered at present, in many cases they do positive harm. Mr C. S. Loch, a member of the Aged Poor Commission, in a most excellent pamphlet, entitled "Parochial Charities as a Means of providing Pensions or Allowances to the Poor in Old Age," gives many instances to show how the endowed charities are apt to debase and pauperise the people, and shows how they might be used so as to prevent distress and promote thrift. A considerable amount of pauperism would be prevented if the five conditions of good administration of such charities, which Mr Loch lays down, were complied with.

(*a.*) Inquiry, or the obtaining of complete verified information in regard to each case. (*b.*) Adequate assistance suitable to the need of the particular case. (*c.*) An insistence on the obligation of relations and friends to help according to their ability. (*d.*) Co-operation among almsgivers and the charities, and co-operation between these and the Poor Law authorities; (*e.*) Help of such a kind, and under such conditions, as will tend to promote thrift and self-dependence.

It is curious, but I believe it to be the fact, that the giving of relief, whether in its private form as charity or in its public form out of the rates, is the one single thing which is considered to require no previous training. How many Guardians, I wonder, ever make a study of the principles of true charity, not to speak of Poor Law relief, before they allow themselves to be placed in a position to administer it. And yet, as Mr Loch goes on to tell us, if they would only bear in mind these five conditions, acting conscientiously upon them, and adding to them a sixth and supreme condition—personal thoughtfulness and devotion—they would resuscitate the old doles and endowments, and endue them with the healing virtues of living charity. "It is indispensable," he says, "that those who undertake

this work of helpful charity should qualify themselves for it. It is not to be done without training. The general training of a merchant, or a lawyer, or a clergyman does not by any means necessarily fit a man for this task ; and whatever her natural ability may be, a woman can no more undertake it wisely without training and experience than she can become by mere instinct an efficient trained nurse. No doubt in country parishes the problem is or seems simpler than in towns ; but in both town and country, if the old endowments are to be made really serviceable, the conditions of good administration on which we have laid stress must be enforced in one form or another."

Of course, any reform in charity is very much hampered by lax administration of outdoor relief.

We complain now of the increase of vagrancy. Have you ever asked yourselves how vagrants live? They cannot exist on what the casual wards afford them. The fact is, they live on charity. If people would only turn a deaf ear to their long and piteous, but absolutely untrue tales, and sternly button up their pockets, our vagrants would have to turn to some other trade. This form of indiscriminate charity is a great cause of pauperism.

But while I believe that the abuse of poor relief and of charity, being as it is antagonistic to habits of thrift and providence, and an encouragement to intemperance, is the main cause of pauperism, and that an improved administration of both would get rid of a great deal of it, there are of course other causes of pauperism for which it is difficult to find any remedy.

#### WANT OF EMPLOYMENT : A CAUSE.

During a prolonged winter, or during a strike of long duration, a great many men with wives and families dependent upon them are thrown out of work. The problem is one, however, which hardly affects country Unions. Strikes certainly do not affect them,



and I should imagine that frosts sufficiently prolonged so as to seriously interfere with agricultural and building operations do not occur very often in our country, and when they do, means have always been found of relieving the temporary distress without resorting to the Poor Law. We all of us remember the severe winter of 1895. I was a Guardian at that time, and I suppose the distress was felt quite as severely in my own Union as in others. My Board went on administering relief in the usual way during the whole duration of the frost, and when the pinch threatened, they appealed for voluntary contributions, and distributed the fund, which was the result of the appeal, not themselves, but in grants to the various relief committees in the different parishes, according to their needs. That frost affected the pauperism of the Union very little, while I am glad to say that my own parish was in a position to refuse any help from the fund collected by the Board. I do not think that want of employment owing to a severe winter ought to be a cause of pauperism in any country Union. Naturally, those Unions which are not overcareful in the administration of outdoor relief will suffer most during such seasons. The pauperism of the Bradfield Union, for instance, was actually less during the first thirteen weeks of 1895 than it was during the corresponding twelve weeks of 1894, the average number of paupers being 159 and 143 respectively.\* But then the poor in the Bradfield Union have been effectively taught the blessings of providence and thrift.

The figures for the Brixworth Union are equally significant. During the first thirteen weeks of 1895, the average weekly number of paupers was 104, and during the corresponding weeks of 1894, 108. As you all know, after 1895 a change of policy took place, and in spite of the comparatively mild winters of 1896,

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\* For the corresponding thirteen weeks of 1897 the number was 140. See Appendix I.

1897, and 1898, the average weekly number of paupers relieved during the first thirteen weeks of these years was 163, 190, and 195 respectively.\* Thus during the mild winter of this year, the average weekly number of paupers was nearly approaching the double of the number relieved during the very severe winter of 1895.

But as showing how much administration has to do with pauperism at such times, I will take London, my information on the subject being obtained from the very careful paper on "Methods of Relief adopted in the Metropolis during the Winter of 1895," written by Mr C. S. Loch. Mr Loch classified the methods adopted by the Guardians in the different Unions as follows :—(1) The labour yard method ; (2) the relief of the able-bodied outside the House, and without a labour test ; (3) outdoor relief kept within the normal bounds of such relief in the particular Union ; (4) the provision of special employment in co-operation with charity ; and (5) the so-called "strict" administration, based on the restriction of outdoor relief and co-operation with charity.

Mr Loch gives ten Unions as illustrations. Greenwich, Poplar, and St Olave's, in spite of all the bitter experiences and disappointments of the past, adopted the first method ; St Pancras and Camberwell adopted the second ; Holborn and Lambeth the third method ; St Saviour's the fourth method ; and Shoreditch and St George's in the East the fifth method.

The following figures which I have compiled show graphically the results of these five policies. They cover three months (January, February, and March), and give the number of paupers relieved on the last day of the first week of January 1895, the date when the number of paupers was highest, and the number of paupers relieved on the last day of the last week in March 1895.

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\* The full figures will be found at the end of my paper. See Appendix II.

UNION.	Pauperism on Last Day of First Week of January.			Highest Pauperism.			Pauperism on Last Day of First Week in April.			Date of Highest Pauperism.
	In.	Out.	Total.	In.	Out.	Total.	In.	Out.	Total.	
1. { St Olave's - Poplar - Greenwich -	2,373 2,993 2,998	2,674 1,759 1,359	5,047 4,752 4,357	2,421 3,082 3,075	12,690 5,848 7,679	15,111 8,930 10,754	2,398 3,017 2,874	3,392 1,974 3,188	5,790 4,991 6,062	Last day, 1st week March. " " " 3rd week February.
2. { Camberwell - St Pancras -	2,804 4,679	3,818 2,007	6,622 6,686	2,969 4,942	9,515 5,625	12,484 10,567	2,860 4,682	4,086 2,063	6,946 6,745	Last day, 2nd week February. " 3rd " " "
3. { Lambeth - Holborn -	3,522 3,874	3,236 1,712	6,758 5,586	3,683 4,087	3,993 2,049	7,676 6,136	3,477 3,691	3,413 1,845	6,890 5,536	Last day, 2nd week February. " " " "
4. St Saviour's -	4,369	1,347	5,716	4,678	2,674	7,352	4,359	1,521	5,880	Last day, 3rd week February.
5. { Shoreditch - St George's-in-the-East -	1,951 1,136	771 28	2,722 1,164	2,033 1,190	974 35	3,007 1,225	1,932 1,103	675 17	2,607 1,120	Last day, 1st week March. " 3rd week February.



The figures show very clearly what is the best policy to be adopted. The outdoor labour test has over and over again been shown to be demoralising. It is astonishing that Boards of Guardians should continue to resort to it. Far better is it for an urban Union, when the Workhouse accommodation proves insufficient, to adopt the policy which the Birmingham Guardians adopted in 1879 with such satisfactory results, and that is to provide for the *indoor* relief of the able-bodied by (if necessary) taking, temporarily, some disused building which can be used as a branch Workhouse.

In an interesting paper by Mr George Craighill, the Clerk to the Gateshead Board of Guardians, entitled "An Experiment in dealing with the Out-of-Work Question," he describes the system which his Board adopted during the winter of 1894-95. Past experience of the labour yard had convinced the Guardians that that was the worst possible way of relieving distress. They consequently administered relief by means of a charitable fund which an appeal for charitable help had collected. This is not a course, however, which I should be prepared to recommend, and it is throwing additional and responsible work on Boards which they ought not, I think, to undertake as such.

Experience seems to me to have proved that the best way to relieve exceptional distress is for charity to be well organised in every parish, and for the Guardians to refer applications for relief out of the ordinary to such an agency to deal with. There can be no doubt that when public authorities go out of their way to provide work for the unemployed, they are helping to increase that class, until at last the "exceptional" unemployed become to be the "permanently" unemployed. It was noticed in London during the terrible winter of 1895 that the gulls came up the river to be fed. They *were* fed, and they took up their station on the Thames until the mild weather came in; but the following year they returned again,

although the necessity for so doing was absent. They had in a way been pauperised. They had got relief easily, and they were encouraged to come another year to try for it again. These gulls have taught us our lesson.

As to distress caused by strikes and lock-outs, I have no time to deal with it now. I think, however, that the responsibility of dealing with them ought to be left to those who bring them about, and that it should not be thrown on the rates.

There are many other causes of pauperism which will no doubt be brought up during the course of the discussion on this paper. One I might mention arises from indiscriminate marriages. How much of our pauper lunacy may be attributed to this cause? It seems to me that much more might be done than is done now to prevent such marriages, even if it implied detention in institutions, whereby, as Mr Wickham Tozer expressed it in a very interesting paper which he read last October at the North Midland Poor Law Conference, men and women would be rendered incapable of "entailing their loathsome and disabling maladies upon their helpless offspring, and making them a burden to the community."

But again I come back to the point with which I started. I am convinced by all I have read and all I have seen that the mainspring of pauperism is the careless administration of relief, and especially of outdoor relief. It discourages providence and thrift, and is a consequent encouragement to intemperance. It is antagonistic to the best interests of the friendly societies. I could not, under existing conditions, advocate the abolition of outdoor relief, but I do most sincerely ask Guardians to be more careful how they do grant it, and to lay down rules for its administration. By the strict adherence to such rules many a Union has reduced its pauperism to a marked extent, and to the great and lasting benefit of those whom we call the "poor."



## APPENDIX I.

BRADFIELD PAUPERISM—First 13 Weeks of 1897.

[Population of Union, 1891, 18,017.]

Week.	In.	Out.	Total.
1	121	18	139
2	122	18	140
3	123	19	142
4	126	19	145
5	128	19	147
6	129	18	147
7	129	18	147
8	126	18	144
9	118	19	137
10	118	18	136
11	115	25	140
12	116	18	134
13	110	15	125

# APPENDIX II.—BRIXWORTH UNION.

[Population, 1891, 12,186.]

RETURN OF THE NUMBER OF PAUPERS RELIEVED each Week in the First Quarters of the Years 1894, 1895, 1896, and 1897.

Quarter ending Lady Day.	1894.			1895.			1896.			1897.			1898.		
	Out-door.	In-door.	Total.	Out-door.	In-door.	Total.	Out-door.	In-door.	Total.	Out-door.	In-door.	Total.	Out-door.	In-door.	Total.
1st Week of Quarter	-	92	111	18	79	97	62	104	166	107	86	193	114	82	196
2nd "	-	18	108	18	79	97	62	103	165	110	85	195	113	82	195
3rd "	-	18	109	18	79	97	65	99	164	110	85	195	120	77	197
4th "	-	18	109	21	85	106	65	95	160	110	86	196	122	78	200
5th "	-	20	108	18	89	107	66	96	162	105	87	192	119	75	194
6th "	-	18	109	18	90	108	66	97	163	105	85	190	115	76	191
7th "	-	18	107	18	90	108	69	95	164	106	85	191	117	76	193
8th "	-	18	107	18	89	107	68	94	162	107	82	189	115	79	194
9th "	-	18	110	17	88	105	72	92	164	104	82	186	115	79	194
10th "	-	18	111	16	91	107	72	90	162	102	84	186	117	79	196
11th "	-	18	105	17	90	107	74	89	163	101	84	185	117	79	196
12th "	-	18	103	17	91	108	74	88	162	101	84	185	117	78	195
13th "	-	18	104	17	87	104	74	88	162	101	79	180	116	78	194

## DISCUSSION.

Rev. Dr Cox (Brixworth Union) said he felt it would be rather cowardly if such marked though courteous reference to his policy at Brixworth were not responded to. He was a little sorry to have to fight over there again the old Brixworth battles, but he felt bound to show how the change in question had come about. They were told to look upon it with mournful feelings as a strange relapse. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) If Mr Chance would visit Brixworth and ascertain the opinion of the poor in the various villages—the honourable, straightforward poor—he would find them in the proportion of ten to one against the old principle. The old principle, if it was a right one, was carried out in such a way that it ought to have commanded success. He did not suppose there could be a really more kindly-hearted man than Canon Bury, and he did not think there could be kindlier persons than those who were entrusted with the administration of the Rev. Canon's "private fund." [The CHAIRMAN: The question is, "The Causes of Pauperism and its Prevention."] "The causes of pauperism" included the lax administration of relief, and Mr Chance had contended that the present system at Brixworth tended to produce pauperism. The old system at Brixworth could not possibly have gone on unless there had been the "private fund." It must have fallen to pieces long before the Act of 1894, for it was not appreciated by the people of the place, who preferred to go to a public fund administered in a public manner, and he maintained that there was less real taint of pauperism in receiving something from a common social fund, to which every one was compelled to contribute in cases of destitution, rather than to have to go to some private fund administered by the clergyman or somebody else in the parish. With regard to out-relief, many of the cases mentioned by Mr Chance were entirely unknown in Brixworth. He seemed to think it would promote drinking. The Brixworth Guardians were most careful to find out the way in which the money was used, and to the credit of the Board he might say that the only case of drunkenness on the part of an outdoor pauper was one which was reported to the Board by one of the most ardent of the advocates of out-relief, and the relief was at once cut off in that case. Instead of mourning over the change of policy in Brixworth, he rejoiced over it, when he contrasted the state of things now and prior to the passing of the Act of 1894. All applications for relief were thoroughly discussed, and in every case where it was granted, it was a necessity. When they considered that wages were only about thirteen shillings a week, they must see how in sickness and old age the pinch came. But the Board were by no means opponents of the friendly societies. It did not follow that because there was a stringent system of offering the Workhouse test that people were made thrifty. Having been exceedingly interested in provident matters ever since his childhood, he was astonished to find how few of the people were in any decent benefit society at all.



He protested against the statement that it was their absolute duty to close their pockets against any one who applied to them for charity. The poorer brethren often set them a good example by the charity they offered to those who had the misfortune to get on the road. Though they might make mistakes in giving, and though nine out of ten might be scamps, the tenth might be a good and worthy man. (Hear, hear.)

Mr PELL (Hon. Sec., Ely) said it seemed to him that the main idea of the paper was, that amongst the many causes of pauperism, one of the principal causes was lax administration of outdoor relief. Dr Cox had endeavoured to meet that argument, but so far as he (Mr Pell) could see, his own remarks rather bore out Mr Chance's contentions, for he had admitted that the number of paupers had increased, indeed that there were now ninety more than there were prior to the change of policy some three or four years ago. Dr Cox contended that though pauperism had increased, it had conduced to the happiness of the community. He was often in the district, and he wished he could discover some evidence of that improvement in the condition of the people. He remembered that at the Central Conference some years ago it was urged that though the Brixworth system had decreased pauperism, it had done so by driving the poor into the adjacent Unions. He would like to hear whether the people were now flocking back from those Unions to their old home, in consequence of the change of policy. For his own part he could not see that one single soul was the better for the change of policy, and the only tangible result so far, had been the appointment of two relieving officers instead of one. [Dr Cox: At a total amount of less than that formerly paid for the one officer.] (Laughter.) One cause of pauperism was the "Compound Householders Act." If the Act were done away with, there would be a marked decrease in pauperism. Though theoretically every householder paid rates where the landlord actually paid them, the rents of the cottages remained about the same whether the rates went up or down. If every labouring man had to pay his rates direct, there would be a much closer scrutiny of the relief lists. No one was sharper to detect a rise in the rates than the small holder. Another cause of pauperism was the system of "deferred pay." He would like to see it abolished, and in place of it an increase of the daily pay during actual service in the army. As a general rule strict administration of relief reduced the number both of outdoor and indoor paupers. It was chiefly in the large towns where the number of indoor paupers had not decreased in corresponding ratio with the decrease in the outdoor list.

At the afternoon sitting,

Mr ABEL HENRY SMITH, M.P., presided.

The discussion on Mr Chance's paper was resumed.

Mr LITTLE (Peterborough) said that he was very much pleased with Mr Chance's paper, which was of great excellence throughout, and though he did not agree with Mr Chance in many of his pro-

positions, he thanked him for laying the matter before them so fully and fairly. (Hear, hear.) He considered that out-relief was often of the greatest possible value to the children in poor families, and that if Guardians made a mistake at all in the administration of relief, they should err rather on the side of the children, in whom was their hope for the future. It was frequently extremely difficult for parents to rear their children in such a way as their health required. The drink question could be grappled with by firm administration. He did not agree that Guardians should have a rigid code of rules for granting relief. Each case should be dealt with on its merits. Guardians were constantly being called over the coals by the Local Government Board because of the excess of outdoor relief over indoor relief. They were sent there to spend the ratepayers' money, and if they spent it to the satisfaction of the ratepayers, that ought to suffice. The ratepayers would pretty soon displace Guardians who did not please them. (Hear, hear.) The Local Government Board should devote its attention to other matters instead of bothering over the details of relief. He believed that out-relief should be liberally distributed, rather than otherwise. (Hear, hear).

Rev. JAMES BOTTERELL (Edmonton) said that the best treatment of the poor depended upon the locality in which they reside. He represented the Edmonton Union with a population of nearly 300,000, and a rateable value of £1,300,000. While in a rural parish the Guardians might know all about every recipient of relief, it was impossible in such a district as Edmonton. Each case was investigated conscientiously with a view to find out the sort of home and whether the applicant would be better off in the Workhouse; and whether there were any relatives who ought to contribute; and each case was dealt with on its own merits. After ten or twelve years' experience of poor-law work he felt that they should not try to devise any set of rules to meet every case. The Edmonton Board had an excellent school in which they endeavoured to keep the children absolutely free from the pauper taint. The children were not dressed as paupers, and they were as well treated as in any institution in England. (Hear, hear.) Guardians should spare no pains to save the children from the taint of pauperism. (Hear, hear.) Conferences of that kind were very useful in order that Guardians might benefit by the interchange of opinion and the experience of others.

Mr CHANCE, in reply, said he thought Dr Cox ought to thank him for mentioning Brixworth, though he did not think Dr Cox had disposed of the criticisms contained in the paper. One interesting question was how far the administration of relief affected the friendly societies, in fact, it would form a capital subject for discussion at one of the Poor Law Conferences. It was desirable to have rules so as to keep a certain standard for the administration of relief before them. If Guardians would make strict rules they might materially



reduce expenditure on relief. When relief was granted it should be adequate. The wonderful work done by the late Mr Morton Latham, as Chairman of the Edmonton Board of Guardians for many years, must be admitted by all Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Mr LITTLE asked whether Mr Chance assumed that where out-relief was granted there had not been strict inquiries. If they did not get the true facts before the Board, it was not through lack of inquiry.

Mr CHANCE said he was not making any personal charge of neglect.

Mr ASHWELL (Hertford and Ware) said that unless Guardians attended the Board meetings regularly, and investigated applications for relief, they could not do justice between the ratepayers and the poor.

This closed the discussion of Mr Chance's paper.

Mr PELL (Hon. Sec.) read the following paper, in the absence of the author, who was engaged as a candidate in the Parliamentary contest for Norfolk, on "Local Taxation."

## LOCAL TAXATION.

BY MR J. SANCROFT HOLMES, *Gawdy Hall, Norfolk.*

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THE appointment in 1896 of a Commission, "To inquire into the present system under which taxation is raised for local purposes, and to report whether all kinds of real and personal property contribute equitably to such taxation, and if not, what alterations are desirable to secure that result," is the most important step in the direction of local taxation reform which has been taken by any Government during the last half-century. More than twenty-five years have now elapsed since the House of Commons passed a resolution, by a majority of a hundred, to the effect that it was expedient to remedy the injustice of the incidence of local taxation, and in the interval the necessity for a complete revision and readjustment of the whole system has greatly increased; the duties placed in the hands of local authorities have been widely extended, and as a consequence the sums required and raised by rates have risen, till they now rival in amount the sum col-

lected by the Imperial authority, the aggregate expenditure by local authorities in England and Wales alone, for the year 1894-95, amounting to over 59 millions, the outstanding debt at the same period being over 235 millions. That the whole of this burden should have been allowed to accumulate as a debt due by real estate alone, seems incomprehensible, when it is remembered that personal estate was at one time liable for rating purposes, and that there has been a relatively far larger increase in the value of personal property than in real property during recent years. The income-tax returns give the following figures :—

		1871.	1891.
Schedule A Assessment	- -	£142,736,057	£177,725,959
„ D „	- -	189,305,247	306,538,198

Showing that while in twenty years there has been an increase of 24.5 per cent. in the value of land and houses, there has been in the same period an increase of 61.9 per cent. in the profits arising from property, businesses, professions, and trades.

Many persons are probably not aware that when rates and taxes were first levied, inhabitants were assessed according to their ability, and not merely on account of their real estate. Land tax was, from the year 1689 to 1798, levied on all estates, both real and personal. Up to 1840 personal property was liable to be, and was assessed in some cases, for poor's-rate purposes; it was then exempted by a special Act of Parliament, but only as a temporary measure, pending a resettlement of the whole question. In the fifty-seven years which have since elapsed Parliament has never found it necessary or convenient to deal with the question, and an Act is annually passed continuing this relief to personal estate.

For a concise and most interesting history of local taxation, I will refer any one who wishes to be better informed, to an article by Mr R. H. Rew in the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*, December 1896. Much

valuable information may also be obtained from the Annual Report of the Local Taxation Committee, a body which has done and is doing excellent service in bringing out the real facts of the case, and in seeing that the ratepayers' interests are duly considered in the House of Commons. The work this Committee is doing deserves more hearty support and financial help than I am afraid it now receives.

The terms of reference to the Commission, by which the question of the equity of assessing personal property for local purposes, raises the issue which is of the greatest importance to the owners and occupiers of real property; but there is another question, in my opinion, of only secondary importance, which is not included in the reference—the question as to what are national, what local purposes? It is one of the chief complaints at the present time that charges, such as those for the Relief of the Poor, the Maintenance of Pauper Lunatics, the Police, Prosecutions, Education, and Highways matters, all of which are much more than local in their scope and action, and all of which are directly controlled by the Imperial authority, are classified as local, and as such become a burden on one part only of the national wealth, and that the lesser part. Parliament has for many years acknowledged that all these various purposes have claims upon the national purse, and has from time to time made in respect of each grants in aid; but these grants have unfortunately, had no effect in reducing the ratepayers' burdens. The charges now imposed by local taxation fall with crushing severity on districts where the main industry is corn-growing, and where the ability of the inhabitants to pay rates depends upon the profits derived from farming. The rateable value of the corn-growing counties has largely decreased, and public charges constantly increasing, the result is that in some cases almost the entire profit has to go to meet public burdens. Parliament, in imposing these charges,



never contemplated that the time might come, when the very existence of agriculture would be imperilled by them; but that such is the case is only too clearly proved by the reports of the various Assistant Commissioners who have recently visited Essex, Norfolk, and elsewhere. Now that Parliament is aware of the true position of affairs, it behoves her to relieve adequately and effectually an industry the most important, and, in fact, the very mother of every other trade and industry in the country.

The figures below, taken from the Local Taxation Returns, show the increase in the rates levied by the local authorities for six different purposes, all of which are subsidised by the Imperial authority by grants in aid, and therefore recognised as of national importance :—

	1884-85.	1894-95.
Relief of the Poor - - -	£6,881,656	£7,666,661
Pauper Lunatics - - -	1,469,843	1,836,220
Police - - -	3,487,932	4,620,448
Prosecutions - - -	...	215,382
Education - - -	2,190,851	6,437,860
Highways - - -	5,439,166	7,182,891
	<hr/> £20,389,449	<hr/> £28,159,474

The increase in one decade being £7,770,725, or 38 per cent. In the earlier period the Treasury subventions amounted to £3,610,219; in the latter, with the addition of sums now collected under the designation Local Taxation Account, to £8,493,680—an increase of £5,383,461, or 149 per cent.

From the returns for 1894-95, it appears that there are now no less than thirty-two different headings under which the ratepayer's pocket may be picked. Of these a large number are under what are called Adoptive Acts, and comparatively rare; others are for purely local purposes, such as gas and water, for which the ratepayer gets value for his money.

It might be supposed, the Government publishing annually a paper entitled Local Taxation Returns, that



this included all the rates and taxes to which the unfortunate ratepayer is liable; but this is not the case, as in addition to the rates enumerated, real property has the special distinction of paying to the Imperial authority land tax, house duty, and in common with personal property, income tax. In dealing, therefore, with figures from these returns, it must always be remembered that they do not show the full measure of real property burdens.

The argument is constantly advanced that the incidence of rates has not increased, despite the largely increased levies. This is certainly not true so far as the five years ending 1894-95 are concerned. In 1890-91 the Extra-Metropolitan rates were 3s. 3 $\frac{6}{10}$ d.; in 1894-95 they were 3s. 10 $\frac{3}{10}$ d.—an increase of nearly 7d. in the £. That the incidence of rates—namely, their proportion to profits—has very largely increased during the last twenty years so far as agricultural land is concerned, is only too well known to every one connected with farming interests. No more conclusive proof on this point can be found than that contained in the evidence before the Royal Agricultural Commission, given by Mr W. Little. In a statement prepared by the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, and submitted to the Commission on Taxation, it is stated that the rates in eighteen Norfolk parishes, taken at random over the whole county, increased from 2s. to 3s., or 50 per cent., in the twenty years ending 1895. The ability of agriculture to bear its burdens has decreased to an extent which it is extremely difficult to estimate or gauge; figures taken from rating and taxation assessments are notoriously inaccurate and misleading, but these show the enormous fall in the value of land. In the report of Mr Shaw Lefevre, 1895, the following figures are given:—

	1870.	1894.
Land, rateable value - - -	£39,835,000	£33,654,000
Other property, rateable value -	65,035,000	127,437,000
	<hr/> £104,870,000	<hr/> £161,081,000

Showing a fall in the value of land of £6,180,000, or 15 per cent., and an increase in other property of £62,402,000, or 94 per cent. In an interim report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1896, figures are given as to the income-tax valuations :—

	1879.	1894.
Gross annual value, lands - -	£51,798,000	£39,680,000

From which it appears that there was a decrease in value of £12,118,000, or 23 per cent. in fifteen years. Both sets of figures prove a tremendously decreased ability on the part of land to bear its burdens. The report on rateable values states that the greatest fall has taken place in East Anglia, in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire.

The Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, has given to the occupier of agricultural land a very much needed and appreciated relief to the extent of £1,331,033 for five years. I could have wished that the rating of farm premises had been included in that of the land, and that the Act had not been of only a temporary character ; but pending a reconsideration and readjustment of the whole question, which the Government has promised, I do not think more could have been expected. It is difficult to see how the Act could have been differently drawn, but the result is not all that could be desired. The better the class of land the greater the help given ; whereas it was the poorer class of land where the help was most urgently needed. That the Act has not removed the grievance of the occupier of land as compared with the occupier of house or trade premises is very clearly shown in Mr Rew's article. He there says :—

“ A yeoman farmer occupying 300 acres is assessed at say £300. Under the Agricultural Rates Act, the house and buildings are assessed at say £50, the land at £250. The rate in the pound may be put at 2s. 3d., which is the average “ rural rate,” according to Sir Henry Fowler. He would pay in rates £19. 13s. 9d.

“ A tradesman occupying premises at £50 rateable value, the rate in the £ being 4s.—the average urban rate, according to Sir

Henry Fowler—would pay in rates £10. It is assumed, so as to be on the safe side, that the tradesman pays nearly double the rate in the £ that the farmer does, though as a matter of fact it may very well happen that he pays the same, or even in some cases less. But when this has been allowed, it will be seen that under the new Act, by which the land pays only half the rates, the farmer still pays twice the amount that his fellow ratepayer in the town has to pay.

“It must be evident that the occupier of land and the occupier of a house are not rated according to their respective “ability.” Nor are they rated according to the benefit which they receive from the expenditure towards which they contribute. The urban ratepayer usually pays, no doubt, a higher rate in the £, though a smaller aggregate amount, than the rural ratepayer, but he obtains in return all the “resources of civilisation” which the former has to forego.”

The reform which can alone adequately relieve real property of its burdens is the making personal property liable for its share of local as well as Imperial charges. How to accomplish this is the difficulty. I do not see that it is possible to assess personal property locally, and even if it were, I do not think that such a system of assessment would be satisfactory. There are wide areas where very little additional revenue could be got by a local assessment of personal property. It is the great general wealth of the country centred in her trades, manufactures, and in her accumulated savings, that requires to be rated in the interests of local charges, which are of national importance. I can suggest no better plan than that the Imperial authority should, while collecting income tax for Imperial purposes, collect such an additional amount for local purposes as will fairly represent the proportion of these charges which should fall to personal property. As to the method of distribution, and the safeguards which will have to be devised to prevent extravagance on the part of local authorities, the limits of this paper will not allow me to discuss. Together with this suggestion, there must be, in my opinion, some action taken by which it will be clearly laid down as to what are, and what are not, national purposes.



In considering the question of a readjustment and resettlement of the incidence of local rates and taxes, I hope that the land tax may be doomed to speedy, if not immediate, extinction. In the words of Sir John Sinclair, "The land tax is the most grievous, the most unequal, the most oppressive tax that was ever raised in this country." Originally levied on all classes of property, in 1798 it was finally fixed as a definite sum to be paid by each parish, and because the wealth of England then centred in her corn and wool producing counties, the quota put upon East Anglia was excessively high, that upon the grass counties being proportionately low. Norfolk pays £84,307; Suffolk, £73,506; Essex, £89,397; Cambridgeshire, £32,695—in all, £279,905, or about one-seventh of the total for England—£1,945,737. Hertfordshire's quota is £42,283 a sum which represents a rate of 2s. per acre. That a considerable portion is now redeemed does not affect the question, as the owner who has redeemed has merely capitalised the annual charge. The gross injustice of the tax is its inequality, Middlesex, including London, paying £326,146, Lancashire £20,990. In these two counties the rate on the £ must be trifling, whereas in East Anglia it is now frequently a rate of 1s.; prior to 1896 it was often as much as 1s. 6d. and 2s., and even more, in the £. The name unfortunately leads some people to speak of it as if it were different in character to other taxes; as a matter of fact, it is leviable on the gross assessment of Schedule A, it is paid in respect of the same property as Schedule A, made payable at the same time, to the same collector, and to the same Imperial authority. Called by its proper name, it is an *Extraordinary Additional Property Tax*, levied mainly on corn land—the poorest class of property in England—and applied to meet the general requirements of a nation whose wealth is increasing by leaps and bounds. In the early years of this century various Acts were passed exonerating the land tax charged on



lands, tenements, &c., belonging to livings and charitable institutions, the whole value whereof did not exceed £150; 2,080 livings were exonerated, of which some 230 were in the diocese of Norwich alone; an evidence that Parliament at one time appreciated the injustice of the tax, and a precedent which it might well follow at the present time. A continuation of the land tax would not be sanctioned for a single day by Parliament, but for the fact that it affects mainly a class which is regarded with hostility by some, and as fair game for spoliation by many of the present electorate. If it was a question directly affecting the working classes it would be proclaimed as a relic of a barbarous age, and condemned as an unholy and unrighteous scheme for extracting from their labour a special, and most unfair tax.

Adam Smith, in defining the true basis of taxation, lays down the following points as essential—Equality, Certainty, Convenience, Economy. I venture to think that in the system as now existing in this country the first essential, equality, is conspicuous by its absence; the second, certainty, no one will question; the third, convenience, so far as local taxation is concerned, has been hopelessly ignored. It is in connection with this point that I think the anomalies of the existing system of assessing real property are most to be condemned.

No one who is conversant with the system under which land and houses are now assessed but agrees that a sweeping reform should be made. The Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture have within the last few months unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

“That the present system, by which one and the same property is or may be assessed for tax and rating purposes by four different authorities, viz., for property tax, county rate, union (including poor, sanitary, district, school board, &c.), and for land tax, is an anomaly. This Council desires, therefore, to

urge upon the President of the Local Government Board the pressing necessity for the immediate passing of a Bill which will have the effect of simplifying matters, by enacting that there shall be one assessment for all tax and rating purposes, such an assessment to be made on one basis common to the whole of England."

Whatever may be urged on behalf of maintaining existing rates and taxes, nothing can be said in favour of maintaining a system of assessment so complicated, so illogical, and so vexatious as the present. If one assessment for all purposes, local and Imperial, is desirable—and I cannot imagine that such a proposition can be controverted—it is essential that it should be uniform throughout England ; in my opinion this can only be effected in one way, by doing away with the existing assessing authorities. Personally I am in favour of a system by which Assessors appointed by the Government should annually make up the county valuation lists, the various local authorities advising the Assessor as to the facts.

In Scotland Assessors appointed by the County Councils, who are also in certain cases Government officers, make up annually the valuation rolls, upon which both Government and local rates and taxes are collected ; the valuation rolls being revised and reprinted every year. If a similar system were introduced for England, and opportunities afforded for half-yearly revision, with an appeal to some easily accessible and inexpensive judicial tribunal, I believe it would afford great satisfaction to the general body of ratepayers, and it would relieve the existing rating authorities from work which is most uncongenial. I should like to see all matters relating to railways, water, gas, &c., determined by some one central authority for the whole of England.

One Assessment for all purposes having been obtained, I hope we may also succeed in securing, what in my opinion is nearly as essential, a register in every

parish, union, county, or other rating area, which will enable the ratepayer, promptly and without expense, to ascertain what is the sum total of the rates and taxes in each separate area. Government returns of the various items of local expenditure are, I know, to be procured, but owing to their immense volume, and the delay which takes place in publishing them, the returns for 1894-95 being the latest complete set now available, it is impossible for the ordinary ratepayer to ascertain what the total burden in any particular parish in which he is interested, may be.

That any alteration in the present system of raising the necessary revenue for local purposes, will create considerable opposition on the part of personal property owners, is only to be expected. It is all the more important, therefore, that every advantage should be taken of the present opportunity to educate public opinion as to the real injustice which has so long been inflicted upon owners and occupiers of real estate. Public bodies should be induced to discuss the question, and resolutions in support of reforms should be carried. Every legitimate means must be taken to press the matter on the attention of Members of Parliament, so that when the Commission reports, the Government may be assured that it has the weight of public opinion at its back, and may be enabled to carry into effect such an alteration of the existing law, as will once and for all settle this vexed and most important question, on lines which shall be fair, and equitable to all concerned.

To sum up the arguments which I have tried to put forward, I fear but very imperfectly, in this paper, I will conclude by urging the importance of—First, the making personal property liable for rating purposes; second, the division of existing local charges into those which are national and those which are only local purposes; and third, the necessity for a thorough reform in the law relating to the assessment of real property.



## DISCUSSION.

Rev. J. BOTTERELL (Edmonton) regretted the author's absence, as he would have liked to hear him define "personal property."

The CHAIRMAN said he thought the author meant that all the sources of a person's income should be considered in rating.

Mr PEART (Edmonton) said that the true remedy would be to tax the land which was not in use, and so raise the working man's pay to a decent living wage. The paper was going back three hundred years, instead of going forward in the interests of humanity. (Laughter.)

Mr ASHWELL (Hertford and Ware) said he could not understand the speech of the last speaker. (Laughter and Hear, hear.) Of course, they would like to pay their workmen more than they were now able to do, and so far from being retrograde the paper seemed to him to hit the mark in advocating the removal of unjust burdens from the land, a step which alone would ameliorate the condition of the agriculturist. (Hear, hear.)

Mr FAWKES (Northampton) said that the author had very clearly demonstrated the inequalities of the present system of assessment.

Mr CHANCE said he would like to know how personal property could be taxed. It had been tried in America, and the difficulty had been to discover the source from which an income was derived. It had been suggested that they should somehow get hold of the Income-Tax Returns under Schedule D. They could see a house and land, but they could not get at the source of an income. Perhaps the Royal Commission would enlighten them as to how they could levy upon personal property for local purposes.

Rev. J. BOTTERELL said that, seeing how small a proportion of the sum collected as "Poor Rate" was applied to the maintenance of paupers, it was time that a new name was found for it. (Hear, hear.)

Mr LITTLE said they could not localise taxation, and they could hardly have a better illustration of the difficulties attending the question than to assume that three men came into a parish. The first, with £1,000 capital, takes a farm; the other, a shop; and the third invests his money in the Funds. The first would contribute to local taxation on the basis of, perhaps, £100 a year; the second probably pays rates on a £20 assessment of premises; while the third need not contribute to local taxation directly at all.

Mr ABEL SMITH, M.P. (the Chairman), said that the matter was one of great importance, and he might venture to say a few words upon it, as he was more familiar with it than with the question which was dealt with by Mr Chance earlier in the day. He thought it was very important that they should distinguish in their minds between urban rates and rural rates—he meant the position of the urban ratepayers and the position of the rural ratepayers. It was often said in discussions of this subject that the position of the rural ratepayers is not nearly so bad as they represented it to be, because the rates in rural districts are so much lower in the pound than in the urban dis-



tricts. But it was forgotten that the urban ratepayer got a great many more things for his money than the rural one, who, indeed, got next to nothing in return for his contribution to local taxation. Income derived from different sources did not contribute equitably towards local expenditure, but it was generally agreed that it was almost impossible to have a local income tax, for, among others, this very obvious reason that a man of large income might have more than one place of residence, and it would be a nice question which of the various Local Authorities concerned should catch him for purposes of assessment. Their duties as members of Assessment Committees were already onerous and unsatisfactory. He believed that they might learn many lessons by studying the Scottish system. There was one most unjust and unsatisfactory branch of local taxation, and that was the land tax, and it was very generally felt that it would be a good thing to abolish the land tax altogether. (Cheers.) It would be a great advantage if, by granting easier terms of redemption, the whole thing could be swept away. (Hear, hear.)

Mr PELL (Hon. Sec.) said he completely failed to understand the speech of Mr Peart, one of the Edmonton delegates. The paper was progressive, and if only the reform of local taxation could be carried out on a sound basis, it would benefit the working-classes as much as anybody. He was glad to say that the Agricultural Rates Act had enabled him quite lately to raise his men's wages a shilling a week all round—(Hear, hear)—with the prospect of another early advance. (Hear, hear.) If that was going backward, all he could say was, it was a retrograde movement which would be highly appreciated by the labouring class of this country. (Cheers.)

Rev. Canon BURY proposed a vote of thanks to the writers and readers of the papers; both the papers were exceedingly good. He asked the members not to run away with the idea that all that Dr Cox said about the Brixworth system was exactly true. If he did not answer Dr Cox, it was because he had grown weary of answering him, and because he thought it was a mistake to narrow the attention of a Conference of that kind to the petty details of a particular Union. (Hear, hear.)

The vote of thanks was carried unanimously.

Mr CHANCE acknowledged the compliment.

Mr PELL (Hon. Sec.) proposed a vote of thanks to the Rev. Canon Bury and to Mr Abel Smith, M.P., for presiding at the morning and afternoon sittings respectively.

This was also carried with acclamation.

Mr ABEL SMITH, M.P., said that he accepted the invitation to preside at the Conference with very great pleasure indeed, and he considered that all Guardians should attend the Poor-Law Conferences and get an intelligent insight into their duties. He thanked the Rev. Canon Bury for kindly taking his place at the morning meeting.

The proceedings then terminated.



## West Midland District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL POOR LAW CONFERENCE FOR  
THE WEST MIDLAND DISTRICT, COMPRISING THE  
COUNTIES OF GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD, SALOP,  
STAFFORD, WARWICK, AND WORCESTER, HELD AT  
THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, MALVERN, ON THE 6TH AND  
7TH MAY 1898.

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SIR RICHARD HARINGTON, BART., IN THE CHAIR.

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The following twenty-six Unions out of the eighty-two Unions in the District were represented at the Conference :—

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.—Barton Regis, Bristol, Cheltenham, Cirencester, Dursley, Gloucester, Stroud, Wheatenhurst.

WORCESTERSHIRE.—Droitwich, Kidderminster, King's Norton, Pershore, Shipston-on-Stour, Stourbridge.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—Burton-on-Trent, Cannock, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton.

HEREFORDSHIRE.—Bromyard, Leominster, Ross.

WARWICKSHIRE.—Aston, Coventry, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon.

SALOP.—Cleobury Mortimer.

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## SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

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FRIDAY, 6TH MAY.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

SIR RICHARD HARRINGTON, in opening the Proceedings, said :—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is now so many years since I had the pleasure of taking part in one of these Conferences, that I cannot acquit myself of grave presumption in accepting the responsibility of presiding at this meeting. With the passing years has come a revolution in Local Government—new subjects of interest have arisen, old ones have faded out of sight ; new sentiments are appealed to, and new principles are introduced. My recollections are of a time when County Councils were a vague dream of the future, when Parish Councils had not even assumed the shadowy outline of a dream, when every Magistrate was an *ex officio* Guardian, and when the elected members of those bodies were chosen by a franchise which gave the preponderating voice to the more substantial ratepayers. Parliament, shall I say in its wisdom?—well, we are all entitled to our own opinions about that, and you, the offspring of the new system, are far better judges than I am—Parliament, I say, has changed all that ; and if, whatever your individual opinions may be, you will allow me to look back with a lingering regret at the *ancien régime*, you will also, I hope, extend to me the benefit of your indulgence, if the few words I have to address to you should fail to keep up with the times in which we live. In my day the question of how far outdoor relief should be given was the burning one ; the system of the Atcham Union was the constant theme of discussion, and in those discussions I had to feel that the Board, of which I was then Chairman, had a hard task to justify its existence, without following the Spartan severity of that model Union ! And I see that whatever may be said of the particular Board to which I have referred, which is now under abler and more energetic guidance than my own, my unfortunate county (Herefordshire) has not even yet lived down the reproach. For we are described, as recently as this time last year, in the speech of no less an authority than Mr Chance, the Hon. Secretary of the Central Poor Law Conferences, as occupying a very unenviable position among all the counties in England and Wales, only two others having a larger amount of pauperism. Why, he asked a little earlier, was the pauperism of Herefordshire double that of Warwick and Salop ? And why was there such a difference between that of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, which were only separated by the Malvern Hills ? Well, as I am a Herefordshire man, I will try to answer these two questions. The answer to the first is a very simple one, and consists of three words—“It was not.” The total expenditure on relief, according to the figures from which Mr Chance was quoting, was in Warwickshire 5s. 5d., and in Shropshire 4s. 10½d. per head of the population. In Herefordshire it was 7s. 11d. I only



learned my arithmetic in an effete public school fifty years ago, but I believe—and I shall doubtless be corrected if I am wrong—that 7s. 11d. is not the double either of 5s. 5d. or 4s. 10½d. !\* If the comparison is made of the number of individuals in proportion to the population receiving relief, Mr Chance's zeal is still in excess of his arithmetic, though not to so great an extent. The answer to the other question is this: Herefordshire is a purely agricultural county, which Warwickshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire are not. Its poorer inhabitants have no resource but husbandry to earn their living. Its population is continually decreasing by the drain of the younger and more able-bodied into the large towns; and in dealing with those less able to help themselves who remain behind, I fancy that most Herefordshire Boards of Guardians think—it may be an obsolete idea, but I am heretic enough to agree with it—that when an individual, such as, for example, a widow with a family, or an old man or old woman, is industrious and willing to work, and does work and earn all that his labour is fairly worth at the current rate of wages, and yet is physically unable to support entirely himself and those dependent on him, it is not only more humane, but more consistent with common-sense, to make to such a person a small outdoor allowance, and thereby enable him to continue a useful and industrious life at liberty, than to compel him to lead an useless one within the walls of what, in such a case, differs from a prison in name only. This is a very different thing from subsidising the farmers out of the poor rates, as was done before 1834.

But in regard to the discussion which is to take place to-day, I hope that my county, and particularly that Union of the Board of which I was many years ago Chairman—Bromyard—may be found less open to criticism. For I see on the programme before me that we are to have the advantage of a paper from a gentleman whose military experience entitles him to speak with especial force on such a subject—on vagrancy and deferred pay. I have not seen the paper, and will not attempt to anticipate its contents; but I may venture, as an humble civilian, to observe that to turn a young man, who has been subjected for several years to the strict discipline of military service, adrift, with the controlling influence of that discipline suddenly removed, and a considerable sum of money in his pocket, must in all cases be at least a dangerous experiment. How far it may be connected with one of the most troublesome and difficult questions of the day—the suppression of mischievous vagrancy—is a matter which will be dealt with by the writer of the paper, and which it is not my province to discuss. The trouble, however, is no new one, nor is it confined to this country.

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\* Mr Chance writes to say that his assertion was that the *pauperism* of Herefordshire was double that of Warwick and Salop, and not that the *expenditure per head of population* was so. His statistics were taken from the Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for the year ended Lady Day 1895, and are accurately given in the Reports of Poor Law Conferences for 1897-98, at p. 73.

In all civilised communities there appears to have existed side by side with the settled race, a class—nay, rather a separate nationality—which would seem to have handed down as its inheritance, not only the blood, but the habits of those Scythian ancestors—“*Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos.*” Gipsies have been the subject of restrictive legislation for centuries. “Vagrom men” were not unknown to Dogberry; “valiant beggars” were a nuisance in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The statutes of 35 Geo. III., cap. 101, sec. 5, and 5 Geo. IV., cap. 83, sec. 20, were intended to compel their removal to their places of settlement; but it has been reserved for the latter half of this century to feel the full force of the nuisance. That created by gipsies is attracting the attention of the County Councils throughout the kingdom, but the vagrant who crowds our casual wards is no gipsy. His is no inherited instinct in favour of nomadic life. He is an eruption which has broken out on the skin of civilisation, but he may, I think, be divided into two classes. That which contains the largest majority consists of the scum of great towns, of persons to whom their desultory habits, bad character, and natural indolence make regular work unwelcome or extremely difficult to obtain. The habit once acquired of wandering aimlessly about the country in a vicious circle grows rapidly on such persons. They become well known in certain districts, and Masters of Workhouses may, I believe, reckon with a fair amount of certainty on seeing the same faces in their vagrant wards at more or less regular intervals. When I said that these persons wander aimlessly, I should have said aimlessly except for mischief; for in rural districts most of the crime existing, and crime in its most cruel form—robbing of the poor, or the scarcely disguised robbery of obtaining alms by threats from them—is traceable to these vagrants.

But there is another class of wayfarer of a very different kind,—a small minority of the whole, I fear—namely, that of those who, too poor to obtain the means of conveyance, are for some lawful purpose journeying from one point to another. Good policy and humanity alike would agree in obstructing the former and aiding the latter class, and an organised attempt has been made to effect this object in both Worcestershire and Herefordshire—I wish I could add Gloucestershire also. By the Wayfarers’ Relief Society in Worcestershire, and the Mendicity Society in Herefordshire, way tickets are given to those who are believed to be really destitute wayfarers, entitling them to a meal of bread at a point midway between that of starting in the morning and of arrival at night, so long as they continue to proceed to their destination. And in Herefordshire, and particularly in the Bromyard Union, the power of detention for two nights, conferred by the Casual Poor Act, 1882, 45 & 46 Vict., cap. 36, sec. 4, is enforced against vagrants with the greatest stringency, and a real task of work is required from them. In our poor retrograde county of Hereford the result has been most satisfactory. Notwithstanding that it is particularly open to the incursions



of the vagrant class—lying, as it does, on the route between the great industrial centres of the Birmingham black country and South Wales, and attracting, moreover, in the hop-picking season a great number of persons seeking employment in the hop yards, who, if they arrive, as is frequently the case, before the hops are ready for picking, are thrown in the interval on their own resources—yet—and in our Chief Constable's opinion mainly owing to the system we pursue—the number of wayfarers sleeping in Unions has decreased from 40,948 in 1894 to 16,893 in 1897, and that of those sleeping in common lodging-houses from 27,955 in 1894 to 15,743 in 1897. And this decrease was accompanied by a corresponding decrease in begging, the apprehensions for that offence being in 1895, 77, and in 1897, 24. In Worcestershire the usefulness of the Society has been greatly impeded by the apathy of the Boards of Guardians and Masters of Workhouses, it being apparently impossible to induce the latter to take any trouble in (so to speak) sorting the wayfarers, even by the offer of a small remuneration for doing so. Gloucestershire gives the bread tickets, but makes no distinction between the vagrant and the destitute wayfarer. In my opinion, the evil of vagrancy can only be satisfactorily dealt with by combined, firm, and allied action on the part of the Guardians, the police, and judicious persons entrusted with the distribution of charitable funds. To enter fully into the details of how this may be done would trench too much on the time allotted to those who are to address you. But I do very earnestly entreat those who are present here to-day to give the subject their earnest consideration, and endeavour if possible to extend a system which, imperfectly worked as it is, has done so much good in at least one of your West Midland counties.

There yet remains another and most interesting subject on which you will hear a paper to-morrow—that of Workhouse nursing. We cannot but feel that we owe to the fact of ladies having been introduced into Boards of Guardians the increased attention which is paid to this subject. If the lines are true—(I omit the uncomplimentary couplet out of respect to the ladies who have graced this meeting with their presence)—

“ When pain and sickness rend the brow,  
A ministering angel thou ”—

of women in their home relations, how much more true is it of those who give their time and energies to the relief of the suffering of their poorer fellow-creatures, who have no home to which to look for the ministering angel. The author of “*Oliver Twist*” drew an exaggerated picture, and was an unfriendly critic no doubt, but his description of the deathbed in her confinement of Oliver's mother, attended by no one but an old pauper woman and a doctor who did such things by contract, is not so far removed after all from a true picture of what was likely to have taken place in the earlier days of

the new Poor Law. That things are so different now, that we are improving, and shall daily continue to improve in the discharge of the duties which we owe to the sick, suffering, and helpless, is owing, I am sure we shall admit, at least in a great measure, to the influence of such ladies as I have referred to, nor would we have any better instructress in the best method of continuing that improvement than a lady holding a position involving such responsibility, and necessarily implying so much experience, as that of Matron of the Birmingham Infirmary.

The HON. SEC. said that he had been requested to read a resolution of the Somerset Poor Law and Rural District Association, proposed by Mr Fox, of Wellington, at a meeting held on 7th February 1898, and carried:—"That the legal dietary for vagrants should comprise a mid-day dole of bread and cheese on leaving the Workhouse, so as to remove all excuse for begging." (Hear, hear.)

The following paper was then read:—

## VAGRANCY AND RESERVE PAY.

BY LIEUT.-COL. GRANVILLE BROWNE.

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THAT a large number of men who have served in the army of the Queen, possibly with distinction and credit, and who have been discharged in the ordinary course of service and through no fault of their own, should drift into the ranks of pauperism or become recruits in the great army of vagrants, is a most unsatisfactory result of our present system of enlistment. But the fact is undeniable. Although I am not able to place any accurate statistics before the Conference, there is no doubt that a considerable number of old soldiers are to be found in our Workhouses, and that a large percentage of more or less habitual vagrants are or have been in the Army Reserve. The porter at my own Union Workhouse, which is in the neighbourhood of Bristol, informs me that, from inquiries made by him during the past quarter, he feels convinced that at least one-third of the men who have applied to him for admission to the casual wards have been connected in some way or other with Her Majesty's service. I observe that in a paper read before the Central



Poor Law Conference in London, in March 1896, the number is estimated at about one-fifth, but it may have been increasing since then. In either case the percentage is a very large one, though it is almost impossible to form any estimate of the actual number of men represented, because no census has ever been attempted of the average number of vagrants on the road, including those who sleep in common lodging-houses, sheds, &c., as well as those who seek the shelter of the Workhouse casual wards. It has, however, been computed that there are, on the average, something like 60,000 vagrants, of whom perhaps some 50,000 are men. This is probably a very outside estimate, but if we take it as a basis for calculation, and divide by five, we should say roughly that there are 10,000 men on the road who have been connected with the army, and the great majority of whom are doubtless short-service men, and either are, or have been, in the Reserve. This is not a large percentage of the total number of old soldiers in the country, but it is a very striking feature in the general question of vagrancy.

In order to account for the comparatively recent growth of this army pauperism, we must go back to about the year 1870, when Mr Cardwell, then Secretary of State for War, introduced what is known as the "short-service" system. Before that time, soldiers had been enlisted for periods of ten or twelve years, after which, unless debarred by bad conduct, they could always re-engage up to twenty-one years, and they then became entitled to a pension of a shilling a day or upwards, sufficient to keep them from actual want. But under the short-service system recruits were engaged for periods varying from three to eight years' service in the ranks, as determined by the Secretary of State for War, after which they passed into the Army Reserve until twelve years' total service were completed. During the time they are in the Reserve, the men receive a small retaining fee of fourpence a day, in

consideration of which they are liable to be called out for service in the event of war or of "imminent national peril." On leaving the ranks, the Reserve man often finds great difficulty in getting employment. The mere fact of his being in the Reserve is against him, because some employers are unwilling to engage men who may be called away suddenly to rejoin the colours. The fourpence a day, paid quarterly, is generally spent as soon as received, and the Reserve man, out of work and out of money, begins by tramping about honestly in search of employment, and too often ends in becoming a more or less habitual vagrant. More than once men on the road have shown me good discharges from the army, signed by officers whom I have known either personally or by name.

How far this unsatisfactory state of things is capable of remedy will be the subject of our discussion this afternoon. Of course there are one or two obvious specifics. The first is to endeavour to induce the Government to return to the system of long service and pensions. But this is out of the question, for the simple reason that there seems to be no doubt that under our present system of voluntary enlistment there would in these days be no chance of obtaining a sufficient number of recruits who would be willing to engage for so long a period as ten or twelve years in the ranks, even with the ultimate prospect of a pension. Then it has been suggested that Reserve pay should be issued weekly; but here again we are met with the difficulty that the clerical labour of the Army Pay Department would be so enormously increased by having to pay some 80,000 Reserve men weekly instead of quarterly that that Department would in all probability strenuously object. Possibly, however, if this Conference and other similar ones were to send memorials to the Government asking that Reserve pay might be issued more frequently than at present, and if possible weekly, the subject might be favourably

considered ; and if the Conference thinks well of it, I am prepared to move a resolution to that effect. It has been suggested that weekly payments might be made through the medium of the Post Office ; but unless the men were always compelled to present themselves at their own local post offices, where they are well known, it would be difficult to guard against personation and fraud. This restriction would, however, in itself act as a check to roving habits, and I do not see why the experiment should not be tried.

There remain such considerations as providing agencies for obtaining the employment of discharged soldiers, and offering inducements to the men to lay by money while still serving in the ranks. But I believe that everything that can well be done in these directions is done already. Societies exist for promoting the employment of discharged soldiers, and doubtless do good work in their way. There is a savings bank in every regiment and battery in the service, and the men are always encouraged to put money into it. Many of them do so. I myself know a case in which a private soldier, on passing into the Reserve after seven years' service in the ranks, was able to transfer some £30 from the savings bank of his regiment to that of the Government Post Office, and thus reverted to civil life in a comparatively independent position. But, as we know, young men, as a rule, live for the present, and do not trouble to lay by money against an uncertain future ; and indeed there are influences at work at the present time which, by discouraging thrift, tend in the very opposite direction.

And this leads me to say a few words on one of the subjects of the day, which vitally concerns the whole question of poor relief—I mean the modern socialistic spirit which openly maintains that there is no reason why pauperism, as we call it, should decrease, but on the contrary that it ought rather to increase ; that every man is justified in spending the whole of



his earnings ; that he is not called upon to provide for the future ; and that if he falls ill or loses his employment, it is his indefeasible right to be provided for by the State. It is obvious that if these notions ever gain the upper hand, we may say farewell to any improvement in the returns of pauperism. On the contrary, we may expect to drift gradually back to the state of things which existed some sixty years ago, when pauperism had increased to such an alarming extent that the two great political parties of the day had to join hands in passing the present Poor Law Act, which, whatever its shortcomings may be, still practically holds the field. Moreover, a blow would be struck at the very existence of our great Provident and Friendly Societies, which are such an honour to the working classes of England, which have done such good work in the past, and which may be destined to do still better work in the future. I say "better work," because it is probably through them, and through their agency alone, that any satisfactory solution will ever be found of the pressing but difficult question of old age pensions for the poor. Personally, I believe that Socialism is the only rock ahead in the otherwise clear course of the vessel of the State. It would destroy independence, enterprise, and self-reliance, and by undermining the qualities which have made England prosperous and great, would surely prepare the way for her ultimate ruin and decline.

A few years ago, shortly before his death in extreme old age, the famous Hungarian patriot Kossuth was conversing with an Englishman in one of the Continental watering - places. The conversation turned upon England, and Kossuth said that he was an admirer of our country, that he valued our national character, and that he believed our Constitution to be the best in the world—"But," he said, "you have one great danger ; it is Socialism—you must stamp it out."

I hope that all of us, whether as Guardians of the

Poor or in any other capacity, will with one accord re-echo these words of the patriot, "you must stamp it out."

Colonel BROWNE read the following extract from the daily papers, adding that he did not know previously that such powers existed; and that they ought to be made known to every Board of Guardians:—

#### IMPROVIDENT PENSIONERS.

Mr C. RICKETT asked the Under Secretary for War whether he could alter the system of paying army pensioners; whether he was aware that in many cases the money was spent in drink within a day or two, and that for the remainder of the quarter the men were destitute; and whether he would consider the question of paying the pensions weekly in future instead of quarterly.

Mr BRODRICK—The reasons against such an alteration have been frequently explained in Parliament. In all cases in which it can be shown that pensioners make habitual use of the Unions through spending their pensions on drink, and application is made by the Guardians to the War Office, the officer paying the pensioners is instructed to pay the men monthly.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Rev. W. MAJOR KINGSMILL (Droitwich) said that people often regarded the question of vagrancy in a wrong light. Vagrancy arose from many causes which they could not fight against. Tickets for relief rather encouraged than discouraged vagrancy, because they kept moving a mass of men who by nature and training would lead a roving life, and the less the tramps are encouraged the fewer there would be. In these days of cheap trains, newspapers, and penny postage there was no excuse for vagrancy. The wandering instinct was very strong in the race, and our Colonies were the outcome of it—(laughter)—using the term in its highest sense. His remedy for vagrancy would be to cease from helping the tramp in any way. The tramps would soon give up their business then.

Colonel CURTIS HAYWARD (Gloucester) said he doubted whether the short-service system had increased the number of tramps. Such short-service men as eventually went on the road would probably have been tramps whether they had gone into the army or not. Their stay in the army had been too short to change their habits. Some time ago, at the instance of Lord Ducie, the Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, a committee was appointed to try to obtain work for old soldiers, and they found that all the Reserve men who were worth their salt got employment. He did not think that there was much of the feeling of aversion to men because they were in the

Army Reserve. A large number of the men who enlisted were loafers before and after they joined the service. He believed that the men ought to get their Reserve pay weekly, and through the Post Office. It would tend to keep men from roaming from place to place. But he would allow men who could show that they were leading a useful life to draw their pay quarterly if desired. He did not agree with Colonel Browne that the fact that they found very few men in the Union with way-tickets showed that the men had not just come from some other Union. It simply showed that they had disposed of their tickets, though it very often entailed another night's detention. To the last speaker he would only point out that if they left tramps alone they would have them sleeping in their barns and so forth, and it would be an intolerable nuisance. In Gloucestershire they had endeavoured to remove any excuse for begging by compelling every tramp to take a ticket, and on the strength of that they asked the public never to give food or money to tramps. (Hear, hear.)

Mr LLOYD BAKER said he could not speak as a military man, but the evil of the Reservists wandering about was so great that even the considerable expense of paying them weekly or monthly should be faced, if it would in any way diminish the evil. Such a system would discourage a roving life. It had been calculated that tramps "earned" about a shilling a day. Perhaps those who were skilful at begging would continue to roam about rather than be restricted to a certain district by the necessity of receiving their pay at a particular post office, but there were many who would give up ranging the country. As long as men could clear seven shillings a week by begging there would be beggars, and there were so many kindly disposed old ladies and others who hesitated to refuse a beggar's request for fear that they might be turning away a worthy individual. In France and Belgium attempts had been made to deal with the question of vagrancy by establishing homes. At — there was a rule that if the vagrant returned within a certain time he would be detained for six months, and rather than be sent back the tramps preferred to commit some small crime and be sent to prison for a shorter period. He did not think that the mid-day meal or the supper would do much to diminish vagrancy.

Mr CHARLES A. GRAY (Coventry) said that Colonel Curtis Hayward hit the nail on the head when he said that the short-service system had not necessarily conduced to vagrancy; at the same time, it was a pity that men could not be kept in the army a little longer. It would improve them, and keep them at a useful occupation. He differed from the President; vagrancy was inherited, and many of the tramps had been on the road from their birth. He was glad that in London the Magistrates had in one or two cases taken away the children of tramps and sent them to industrial schools. But that course could not be generally followed, unless the Legislature made the maintenance of vagrants a national and not a local charge.

Dr MILSON RHODES (Chorlton, Lancashire) said that he was very



glad when he heard that that subject had been selected for discussion at that Conference, which included so many military men. The power to have pensions paid monthly was a very good thing, and he hoped they would all go back to their Unions and avail themselves of it. How many old soldiers came upon the rates? Some time ago he made inquiries as to the number of tramps passing through the Chorlton and Manchester Unions, and he found that one-third of the tramps at Chorlton had been in the army, and that men between thirty and forty years of age were in the majority—men in the prime of life, who certainly ought to be earning their living. The men were not, as he had expected to find, of seven years' service, but those who had stayed on for twelve years and upwards. He was not a military man. He came there for information, and wanted a lot of it. (Hear, hear.) Had those men been "drummed-out" or invalided? People had very cloudy ideas of the meaning of the word vagrancy. He himself used to think before he became a Guardian that the tramp was a person who travelled from John o' Groat's to Land's End. Some time ago he made inquiries as to the birthplace of the tramps in Chorlton Union; 20 per cent. were born in Manchester, and were not in the true sense vagrants at all; and 25 per cent. were born in Lancashire, and were not travelling the country. The adjacent counties contributed 15 per cent.; and the rest of England only 17 per cent. Ireland sent 16 per cent.; and Scotland, with nearly the same population, only 4 per cent. Why there should be that disparity, except through education, he did not know. The majority of the men were unskilled labourers, and this class were also in the majority in France. The best way to prevent men from becoming vagrants on leaving the army would be to keep them at trades during their service. Soldiers who had learned trades, as a rule, got out of the habit of work while they were with the colours, and consequently could not return to their trade when they left the army. (Hear, hear.)

Mr MARK WAYLAND (Headington, Oxon.) said that the reason why so many tramps were twelve years' men was that they had left the army through bad character or physical unfitness for foreign service. Carrying a rifle took a man all his time, and he did not see that he could ask for or get much more than the very good elementary education which was now given to every recruit who needed it. As to vagrancy generally, he did not think that any cure would be found until they had traced the tramp to his origin. If they provided vagrants with more food, they might stop a great deal of promiscuous charity, and save a large sum of money. He thought that Guardians should also have the power to detain a tramp for seven days unless he could give a good account of himself. If he could do so, then he should be allowed to start early in the morning, and have a good meal. The co-operation of the police should be enlisted in dealing with vagrancy, and it would be a good thing if convicted persons could be detained in the Unions for good and all.

He knew there would be difficulty in maintaining discipline, but he thought that where discharged prisoners found they could not get work, they should be detained in the Workhouses.

Rev. Canon BOURNE (Evesham) expressed his regret that the Government refused to pay to relatives the pensions of men who died, it might be, a day or two before the quarter expired.

Rev. C. P. CAUSTON (Shipston) said he would like to speak of the real fine old British tramp, who never had worked, and never would work. They got a good meal in the morning, and money by fair means or foul, and a good meal at night before turning into the casual ward. He could not conceive a pleasanter existence. The way to stop the tramp would be to make the police and the magistrates more alert. He thought it would be a good thing if the authorities would announce that, say ten years hence, all out-relief would be stopped. People would then practise thrift.

Mr W. GILBERT (Warwick) pleaded for powers to deprive vagrants of the custody of children. Unless the children were dealt with in that way, vagrancy would go on for ages.

Mr T. E. SMITH (Birmingham) said that having been a working-man member of his Board for the last seven years, he would like to see the question of vagrancy grappled with from the roots. He would like to make it illegal for a man to tramp from place to place. When once a man took to the road in search of employment, his chances of getting work were reduced to a minimum. He was of opinion that contracts should be entered into by Guardians with the various railway companies by which a necessitous person could be conveyed to centres where he was likely to find employment. If they were going to deal with the children of tramps, then the working men of England would feel that they, too, had a claim to assistance in rearing their families, and the nation would find that a great mistake had been made. He would be glad if a small Committee could be appointed to draft an Act of Parliament making vagrancy illegal, and providing for the travelling expenses of respectable working men.

Rev. H. H. HUFFADINE (Cannock) said they must hear both sides. He emphatically differed from the speaker who could conceive no more pleasant life than that of the tramp. Think of it, turning into a casual ward to sleep on boards with a rug to cover them, and then, after a meagre breakfast, to break several hundred-weight of stone, and after that, whether wet or fine, to tramp to the next Union. To proceed upon the severe lines advocated by some of the speakers—seven days' detention and so forth—would be an infringement of the liberty of Englishmen, and against it he would protest as long as he had any breath in his body. The author of the paper drifted into a vague and vehement argument against Socialism, but what sort of "Socialism" was meant he (the speaker) did not know. Socialism rightly understood was the one thing that was driving them towards the higher life which was guided by the divine hand. Repression would never stamp out vagrancy; it would merely



drive the tramp to the lodging-houses and the farmyards. They should endeavour to bring to bear on the young some ennobling influences which would have a good effect in after-life.

Lieut.-Gen. DAVIES (Pershore) said the vagrants in his Union had decreased lately by about 50 or 60 per cent., and it was chiefly due to making their life a burden to them. With regard to Canon Bourne's remark, he could not help thinking that if proper application was made to the authorities the proportion of the pension due at the date of the death would be paid. It was very sad to hear that there were so many old soldiers dragging about the country. It was a good deal owing to the short-service system; but the short-service system was not the least likely to be done away with. Deferred pay had perhaps produced vagrancy even more than Reserve pay. While it lasted the men did not seek for work, and they got the character of idle loafing fellows. He was glad that deferred pay was done away with, for he really believed it would do something to stop vagrancy.

Mr SHEPHERD (Bristol) said that the speakers had taken a very pessimistic view, seeing how many agencies there were now at work in England, and that there was not such an army of paupers now as in former years. He also spoke as a working man, and could say that machinery was playing havoc with many trades and driving men on to the road in search of employment——

The CHAIRMAN said that the discussion was drifting a long way from the question.

Rev. T. W. HARVEY (Bristol) said it would be a great boon if the Reservists could be paid weekly through the Post Office. It would involve expenditure, but that ought not to prevent a very necessary reform. They needed some method of classifying vagrants, so as to see who were worthy of help. The undeserving should be discouraged as much as possible.

Mr CHARLES HUMPHREYS (Cannock) said that he regarded the whole question of vagrancy as a national rather than a local question; and with respect to those who had been in the army, he thought he might say that the State ought to provide for them in return for the service they had rendered it. A military career robbed a youth of the opportunity of perfecting himself in a trade; and he hoped that a strong resolution would be passed by that Conference, calling upon the Government to provide discharged soldiers with a means of livelihood. Let them do, not as little as they could, but as much as they could for the vagrant, and try to redeem him to respectability.

The CHAIRMAN said they had travelled very far from the subject on the Agenda. The subject of vagrancy generally was a most important one, and he hoped it would be fully debated at some future Conference. He, however, at any rate, would keep strictly to the question of military vagrancy. None could doubt that a large proportion of the unhappy people who roamed about the country had been in the army. It seemed to him that the frequent payment of the Reserve pay at a certain post office would be an automatic remedy



for much of the vagrancy which existed, and would be best for the recipient and best for the country. Perhaps some of the great Benevolent and Friendly Societies would help in the distribution of Reserve pay and pensions, and so assist the soldier to spend the money to the best advantage.

Colonel BROWNE moved — “That having regard to the large number of Army Reserve men and pensioners who become vagrants, this Conference hopes that the Government will consider the question of issuing Reserve pay and pensions at more frequent intervals than at present, if possible weekly, perhaps through the medium of the Post Office.” He said he was greatly indebted to Dr Rhodes for the statistics he had given them that day. It could hardly be doubted that there was a large increase in vagrancy coincident with the establishment of the short-service system. Sailors were seldom found in the casual ward, and that was not because sailors were better than soldiers, but because there was no short service in the Royal Navy. He did not wish to enter upon the subject of vagrancy in general, but he might say that from personal observation he had found that many vagrants were *bona fide* working men in search of employment, and very agreeable and instructive companions they were when one chanced to meet them.

Mr H. STEVEN (Coventry) seconded.

Rev. W. MAJOR KINGSMILL moved that the word “considerable” be substituted for the word “large” in the first line of the resolution.

There was no seconder, and this amendment therefore fell through.

Mr CORDY MANBY (Kidderminster) cordially supported the resolution.

The resolution was carried unanimously, and it was ordered that copies be sent to the Secretary of State for War.

The Conference then adjourned.

In the evening the Delegates, numbering about fifty, dined together at the Imperial Hotel, the President, Sir Richard Harington, in the chair.

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### SATURDAY, 7TH MAY.

On Saturday morning the first business was the election of a Conference Committee.

The election of representatives on the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences was next taken, the retiring members—the Rev. G. Davenport, Foxley, Hereford; Mr C. A. R. Boughton-Knight, Overton, Ludlow; and Mr G. E. Lloyd-Baker, Hardwicke Court, Gloucester (Hon. Secretary of the West Midland Poor Law District)—being re-elected.

Mr Lloyd-Baker was also re-elected Hon. Secretary, with a hearty vote of thanks for his past services to the Conference.

The following paper was then read:—

## WORKHOUSE NURSING.

BY MISS GIBSON,

*Matron of the Birmingham Infirmary.*

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I FEAR that the title of the paper which I have the honour to read here to-day, may have prejudiced many of the Guardians present against it, even before I have begun it, because papers read by those, who must be regarded as "special pleaders" on their own subject, are apt to be somewhat one-sided, and so to be unconvincing, and perhaps even a little aggravating to the less interested listener; and also because, for so many years, this question of nursing in Workhouses has been a perennial one—coming up at almost every Conference—exercising the minds of all Boards of Guardians, and being discussed, and discussed again, without, at least until quite lately, any proportionate result.

To those of us, however, who have watched the progress of nursing in our large Workhouses, the growth has become—and this more especially during the last ten years—rapid and vigorous, and a condition of things which a few years ago seemed unalterable, is now no longer tolerated.

Thirty years ago Mr Rathbone, most enthusiastic of pioneers, and most generous of men, began by importing a trained Superintendent and a few (twelve, I think) nurses from St Thomas' Hospital to the Liverpool Workhouse. These thirteen women undertook the care and the nursing of as many hundreds of patients, and under the gentle rule and powerful personality of Miss Agnes Jones, the Training School, which still exists and flourishes at Browlowhill, was founded and organised.

It remained for Manchester, however, to separate its Workhouse from its Infirmary, and in 1877 Crumpsall Infirmary was opened as a Training School for

Nurses. I should like, if I may, to pause here for a moment to speak of the work done by Miss Hanan, who was the first Superintendent of the Crumpsall Infirmary. We do not always fix our gratitude for, and admiration of, good work, in the proper place, and though Miss Hanan's name is a household word with every Infirmary nurse, I do not know that the great value of her life's work has been recognised as it ought to have been, outside the profession. For twenty years Miss Hanan worked in the Crumpsall Infirmary, giving it and its nurses all her strength, all her exceptional abilities, and all her heart, and leaving behind her a record of earnest and loving service, which seems to me most enviable. She began her work, when Workhouse nursing was a vocation to which few people—even of those who knew its terrible need—had the courage to devote their lives, and she kept to it, amidst all its discouragements, until she had made the Training School at Crumpsall one of the first in England. She retired two years ago, in broken health, from overwork probably, leaving to us, her fellow Superintendents, an example of quiet, unassuming, thorough devotion to duty, which we shall do well to follow.

It is quite unnecessary for me to go into the growth all over England of those large Workhouse Infirmaries which have grown up in almost every large town, and which are, many of them, on the same lines as regards administration and medical and nursing treatment as our Hospitals. These have really ceased to be Workhouses, and have become Sick Asylums. I use this word in its original sense. In our large Infirmaries we have a choice of nurses, which makes selection comparatively easy; we have no difficulty in securing first-class applicants, and we have in some of them a medical staff equal to any Hospital. The difficulties of nursing “chronic cases,” of which we hear so much, is minimised by our large numbers, and the intelligent



nurse, though she may have a good many chronic cases in her ward, is very seldom, indeed, without some cases of deep interest, which require her most skilled care. If we think of the nurse as a tender of the sick, a *garde malade* as she is literally called in France, surely the objection to chronic cases becomes rather mysterious, and we feel that the nurse of our day has lost something of the beauty of her calling, and sacrificed the human to the scientific side of her work. Good nursing is required quite as much for the dull old woman, racked by rheumatism, as for the most interesting operation which was ever performed by a brilliant surgeon. I yield to no nurse in my interest in, and care for, a good acute case, but if I had to choose for my life work, between a succession of short brilliant cases, and a ward of helpless and dependent old people, I should choose the old people. I cannot imagine, that the glamour, of the constant excitement which accompanies the care of a quick succession of what the modern nurse calls "good cases," can possibly endure, or that the scientific side of nursing can ever yield an interest which can be lifelong. But the human side is different, and I do believe—nay, I know—that the knowledge of the help we can give to those, who are least able to help themselves, will last, and will repay those who give it, a hundredfold.

I do not suppose that we shall ever all agree on technical details of organisation, administration, and discipline. I read the other day, a paper read at a recent Conference, by an authority on Infirmary administration, with many points of which I found myself entirely at issue; but all the differences with regard to Infirmaries as distinct from Workhouses—by this I mean those Unions which are sufficiently large to enable the Guardians to deal separately with the sick—are so entirely differences of opinion only, that I am anxious to put those on one side, and apply my remaining time to the case of the small country Unions.

In my official position as Matron of a large Work-house Infirmary, I have constant opportunities of hearing, and as a matter of fact, I do hear almost weekly, of the difficulties experienced by Guardians in small Unions in getting nurses, and the almost equal difficulty of keeping them when they have got them. And I also—I have been training nurses for fourteen years—hear equally often the nurses' side of the question. Now, I do not see that the difficulties, either on the side of the Guardians, or on the side of the nurse, are likely to decrease. I think we must all acknowledge very gratefully the attitude regarding nursing taken up by the Local Government Board; we owe a great deal to Dr Downes, and the other gentlemen who have given so much thought and time, to the elimination from our sick wards of the "pauper attendant," and I, for one, entirely realise the benefits, which have grown out of the Orders, issued from time to time of late years, by the Local Government Board.

But there are two clauses of the Order of 29th September 1897, which it appears to me will greatly add to the difficulty which already exists, of obtaining nurses for small Unions. In Article III., Section 3, we read—"That any Superintendent Nurse must have undergone for three years at least a course of Instruction in the Medical and Surgical Wards of any Hospital or Infirmary being a Training School for Nurses, and *maintaining a Resident Physician or Surgeon.*" This regulation appears to me to shut out a number of women who would be quite suitable for the position of Superintendent Nurse in a small Union. It has to be remembered that where there are three nurses, one must be a Superintendent Nurse, so that the number of patients in her charge cannot be greater than, say sixty. Will it be possible to get the number of nurses, with the necessary qualifications, to fill these positions? Where are they to come from? Poor Law nursing offers no advantages to nurses, it carries with it no

professional *kudos*, the work is monotonous, the life dull. The demand for nurses outside the Poor Law far exceeds the supply. The Jubilee District Nursing Association takes up very many, pays them well, and offers them a varied experience and, usually, cheerful surroundings. The increased demand for private nurses makes it easy, for even indifferent nurses, to get employment at once. The Metropolitan Asylums Board employ a large number in their Fever Hospitals.

The demand for English trained nurses in the Colonies, and even in America, is very great, and the Continental health resorts swallow up a number of those, who want an opportunity of seeing a little of the world.

I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say that every nurse, who leaves a large Infirmary with a three years' certificate, can choose any line of nursing work she prefers, putting Poor Law work on one side altogether, and be employed at once; nay more, if she is well recommended by her Training School, she may select her own line, and then have a choice of appointments.

It has also to be remembered that the number of Infirmaries maintaining a Resident Physician or Surgeon is comparatively very small, and that this regulation shuts out all nurses trained in such Infirmaries as Walsall, King's Norton, and Nottingham. I should have thought that three years' training under a *trained Superintendent*, in an Infirmary of not less than 200 beds, with a Visiting Physician and Surgeon who lectured to the nursing staff, would have been quite equal to the requirements of the Order, and would have rendered eligible a number of women who are now shut out from any superior appointment. It might be desirable for those nurses who are trained in small Infirmaries to have an examination in elementary anatomy, physiology, hygiene and practical nursing,



and to choose an examiner who was not connected with the Infirmary in which the training had been given. This plan would, I believe, work well, and I do not think it would be found that women trained as I suggest, were unequal to the skilful care of the sick in the really small rural Unions, where emergency cases are almost invariably treated in the nearest Hospital, and occur at such rare intervals as to be almost non-existent. Before going further in this direction I should like to say a few words of personal explanation. I want it to be clearly understood that in what I have said I have no intention of undervaluing the position of Resident Medical Officer; on the contrary, I regret that every Workhouse containing 200 sick and infirm people has not got a Resident Physician, and I admire the courage of those women who become Superintendent Nurses in such Workhouses, and who have the care of so many human beings from the moment of their entrance into the world, until the moment of their going out of it. I could not myself imagine any responsibility more wearing, than the varied duties those nurses have themselves to carry out. The anxious maternity cases, the sickly babies to be fed, and nursed, and watched, and cared for—babies quite unlike those we are accustomed to see—with sad, little, old, worn faces, and hardly any hold on life. The babies of women who have never seen an infant properly brought up and loved, and coddled, and petted, and who, through their ignorance of child life, have to be taught how to feed and wash and dress their little ones. And the solemn children with chronic hip-joint disease, and the phthisical young men and women, and the paralysed and rheumatic old ones. Think what it means for one woman to have all these on her hands, and to have no one on the spot to whom she can go for advice and instruction. But however desirable I may consider the presence of a Resident Medical Officer, the fact

that very many Infirmaries have not got one has to be faced, and it is for this reason that I press this recognition of the nurses trained in such Infirmaries as those I have named. I fear also that the sick poor may suffer from the latter portion of this Order, because I do not think that the class of woman who has already applied for training at the smaller town Infirmaries will continue to apply, when she finds that at the end of her service she is not considered competent to be Charge Nurse in a small Union. And surely, if this is so, neither can she be competent to be sole nurse in those Unions which are still smaller.

This same objection, I think, applies also to Article V., where we are told that where there is no Superintendent Nurse no person shall be engaged "without having had such practical experience in nursing as may render him or her a fit and proper person to hold the office of nurse." Surely, where there is no Superintendent Nurse, the nurse appointed must have had as much and as thorough training as though there were one, and if this is necessary, where are we to look for the supply of nurses?

Before endeavouring to reply to this question, or at least to indicate a direction in which a reply may be found, may I digress for a few moments, and refer to the difficulties with which the Guardians in country districts find themselves faced now, when they have succeeded in finding a nurse? It is, I believe, a matter of common knowledge, that our best nurses do not continue in Workhouse work, unless they happen to be among the happy few, who are selected to remain in their own Training School. I have found it rather interesting to keep in my memory the reasons which those of our nurses who have gone to smaller Unions have given me for leaving, and these have been in almost all cases identical. I have found, that in Unions where the Guardians have upheld the nurse—where in her own department she has had full control,

where her assistant nurses have had to acknowledge her authority, where her hours off duty have been fixed, and where she has been allowed linen and other comforts for her patients as she needed them—in such Unions she has stayed, enjoyed her work and been happy. But where the Workhouse Master and Matron have been allowed to come at all hours round her wards, to give special instructions to her assistants, and to the workers she has from the Workhouse, where she is accused of extravagance and bad management if she uses more than the regulation number of sheets and other linen, there her work has been a failure, and she has struggled on hopelessly and heartlessly, and left as soon as she could. I dislike this part of my subject very much, because what we nurses say on this point is almost always misconstrued, and I had intended to avoid it. But on thinking it over I thought that perhaps if I could remove a misconception, it might be easier to deal with this matter in the future. I am constantly told that nurses “give themselves airs,” and that the “Matron is as good as the nurse is.” Certainly she is. We don’t deny that for a moment. The question is not, and never ought to have been made, a question of Class; it is a question of knowledge, and there is no superiority claimed except as regards that knowledge. The Matron is doubtless as thorough in her line as the nurse claims to be in hers, but she is not a nurse; no doubt if she were a nurse she would know that sick people cannot be treated like “able-bodied” people, and that a sick ward cannot be kept in the apple-pie order that a dormitory can. She is possibly in every other way equal, or it may be superior, to the nurse, but it does seem to me as absurd, to expect the nurse to submit to the authority of one who has no knowledge of her special subject, as it would be to hold the Matron responsible for the mistakes of the nurse.

The other difficulties—the monotony of the life,



and the monotony of the diet—have been so often touched upon that I need only mention them. I think Lady Guardians could do much to remove the former, and it does not seem to me to require much originality to remove the latter altogether. It is easy to feed nurses well, and the rations allowed in most Workhouses are in money value quite adequate, only they are badly apportioned. Many changes could be permitted with no addition to cost.

And now to return to the remedy for this scarcity of nurses which we all deplore.

I have from time to time, during the reading of this paper, drawn your attention to the fact that our best nurses do not remain in Poor Law work. I look round me at the numbers of nurses who are being trained in the Metropolitan Infirmaries, and in the Training Schools attached to the large provincial Infirmaries in such towns as Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Leeds, and I ask myself what becomes of all of them. We in Birmingham keep many of our Charge Nurses for years, and though we try to keep all our best, many have to leave us at the end of their three years of training, because we have no vacancies for them. This, I imagine, must happen in all large Training Schools. Why should all this work be lost to other Unions? Why should the large Infirmaries not train for the smaller ones, and the smaller ones pass on their nurses to those which are still smaller? Of course such a scheme would require an immense amount of careful consideration, and an effective and capable administrator and organiser, to control and initiate details and general arrangements, and, speaking hurriedly, and without that due amount of calm care which would have to be given to so great an undertaking, there seem to me to be two ways in which such a scheme could be worked out. In either case the first step would be a Conference of the Medical Officers and Guardians of all Unions large and small,

to discuss what would be the various needs of the various places, to approach and secure the co-operation and help of the Local Government Board, and to consider what large Unions were willing and able to give, and what smaller Unions require from them.

Then one of two things would happen. Either a Committee of representative Members of Boards of Guardians, added to a certain number of experts in nursing, having their headquarters in London, would be elected. A Secretary would be chosen who would of course have to be a nurse, and who would select candidates for training, and send them, after they had been seen and approved by her Committee, to the various Infirmaries, where they would receive two years' training. These probationers would be bound to remain in the service of this Committee for four or five years, and to go wherever they were sent during that period. At the end of that period, and according to their merits, a certificate of efficiency for Workhouse nursing would be granted to them. Of course their training would have to be paid for, but this would be a small item, and would, I believe, soon be saved in travelling expenses and advertisements. In order thoroughly to carry out this scheme, the Guardians of all Unions would have to work together for the general good, and it could only be done with the cordial co-operation of the large Unions.

Or, the same idea might be carried out by each district selecting the Infirmaries which were to train their nurses, the Midlands being confined to Midland Infirmaries, the North to Northern, and the South to Metropolitan. The Guardians could then choose the candidates themselves. (I would suggest that this duty devolved on Lady Guardians.) The selected candidates would go for one or two months on trial, to the Infirmary selected for their training, and on being considered suitable, would sign an agreement to remain in the employment of the Guardians who

selected them for a fixed time. The fee for training would probably be about £20, and during the period of training a small salary would have to be paid.

I have already said that I merely throw this out as a suggestion, and I leave to those whose time is their own, which mine is not, the duty of thinking it out and considering if, when reduced to working limits, such a scheme is practicable.

Given the co-operation of the Local Government Board and of the larger Boards of Guardians, I believe it is, and I should prefer myself the scheme which has a Central Committee and works from one centre. For the nurses this would have several advantages into which I have not time now to enter, and I do not see that it would have any corresponding disadvantages to Guardians. Such a scheme would mean some little additional difficulties to the official heads, especially the nursing heads, of the large Infirmaries, but surely we, too, are working for the good of our sick and suffering fellow-creatures all over our country, and not only for our own poor, and surely we are all willing to lay aside our own small interests for the general good.

At any rate it seems to me that something in this direction might be done, and if I have helped by anything I have said, to throw any light on this subject to any one present, I am, much as I dislike public speaking, amply repaid for coming here to-day.



#### DISCUSSION.

Rev. H. H. HUFFADINE (Cannock) thanked Miss Gibson for her lucid treatment of the subject, and said that he could not do better than state what had happened in his own Union during the last twelve months. They advertised for two nurses, and after considerable delay got them, at a salary of £28 a year each. But they disagreed, and one very soon left the Union. The nurses were always treated with the most gentlemanly courtesy by the Guardians—(a laugh)—and it was surprising that though the Board had been advertising for the last three months for a Superintending Nurse at £30 a year—(oh, oh)—there had as yet been no suitable appli-



cant. (Hear, hear.) The Board were in a sorry fix at the present time—(laughter)—for every time they had to increase the nurses' remuneration that of the Matron had to be raised correspondingly, and must always be at least 50s. a year ahead of the nurses. (Ironical cheers.) He hoped that one outcome of Miss Gibson's paper would be the formation of a central training school for nurses, so that country Guardians could obtain nurses from that source.

Dr MILSON RHODES (Chorlton), who was cordially greeted on rising, said he thought he was the individual referred to by Miss Gibson in her very able paper, and though they might disagree on a few points, in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand they were thoroughly agreed, and on one point in particular, that the nursing in the Union Infirmaries should be equal to the best nursing given in private institutions. (Hear, hear.) The recent Order of the Local Government Board had been closely considered by the Northern Counties Workhouse Nursing Association, and if the Conference could see its way to pass a resolution such as that which was indicated in Miss Gibson's paper, he would be very glad indeed. Mr Huffadine said his Board had not been successful in getting a Matron at £30 a year. He was very glad to hear it. (Cheers.) Let Cannock try £45 or £50 per annum. In view of the great competition for competent trained nurses, the Guardians would have to raise the salaries. As a rule, the Infirmaries were not situated in a good part of the town, and they were walled in like prisons, while the dietary was disgraceful. He knew of one large Union where they improved the dietary, and there was now very much less sickness amongst the nurses, and the cost of the change was trivial. Guardians walked through a ward on visiting day, and thought perhaps there was very little for a nurse to do, but they did not see the hard and disgusting duties of the nurse, the dirty cases, the ulcers to be dressed. When off duty the nurses should be made as comfortable as possible. He had heard that day of a place where an old woman, aged sixty years, was "nurse" for some fifty or sixty paupers. He was not a faddist, but he thought there should be one trained nurse to at least every fifteen cases. Miss Gibson would probably say one to every twelve.

Miss GIBSON—I should say one to every eight. (Laughter.)

Dr RHODES—One nurse to fifteen patients was not excessive. There were very few country Unions where the night nursing was efficient. The night was a terrible time of trial for nurses. As to holidays, every nurse should have at least two hours' outing every day, a half day every week, and a whole day every month, with three weeks' complete rest every year. (Hear, hear.) Another thing, they must try and prevent the Matron from meddling with the Superintending Nurse. See that each stuck to her own duties. [By the unanimous vote of the meeting, the five-minute limit was waived in regard to the speech of Dr Rhodes.] In many Unions the appliances were not what they should be. Nurses often injured themselves in

lifting heavy men because there was no bed-crane. There should be one to every bed, especially as they were a great means of preventing bed-sores. Spring mattresses were now as cheap as the old lath bedsteads, and they should be found in every Infirmary. He was glad to hear of the proposed Conference for Nurses, and he hoped that that was one of the first things that the new Poor Law Unions Association—which he hoped they would all join—would take up. (Cheers.)

Mr MURRAY BROWNE (Local Government Board Inspector), who was cordially greeted, said he was anxious to hear what Dr Rhodes, as Chairman of the Chorlton Board, and connected with the Northern Counties Workhouse Nursing Association, and a medical man whose opinions were of the greatest weight, would have to say on this subject. He regretted that Dr Downes and Dr Fuller were not able to attend the Conference, as, though it was quite competent for the Conference to pass any resolution respecting the recent Order, it was chiefly a question for the medical profession. He saw both sides of the nursing difficulty, and he felt that friction could only be avoided by tact and consideration and conciliation on the part of all concerned. (Hear, hear.) Miss Gibson gave a word of caution, especially to Workhouse matrons, but he sometimes thought that the one fault the women had was to quarrel with one another. They did not quarrel with the men, but treated them a great deal better than they deserved; but they were always nagging at one another. (Laughter.) He entirely agreed with what Miss Gibson and Dr Rhodes said, that the Workhouse Infirmarys should be as good as the best Hospitals anywhere, and that was a view that the Local Government Board would thoroughly endorse. (Hear, hear.) As to the payment of nurses, they were underpaid; but women generally were underpaid. Guardians thought £30 a year a good salary for a nurse. It was about the wages of a housemaid, and not so much as some people paid their cooks. Nursing cost a great deal to learn, and was anxious and responsible work, with an appreciable element of personal risk. Another branch of nursing, the care of the infants, was under the careful consideration of the Local Government Board. He thought that in every Workhouse the infants should be in the care of skilled paid attendants of one sort or another. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. W. MAJOR KINGSMILL said that the Guardians would have to do in regard to nurses what the School Boards had to do in regard to teachers just after the passing of the Elementary Education Act, that is, put up with an inferior grade of servant until a sufficient number of efficient persons could be trained. Until there were more trained nurses to be had, Guardians must simply put the Order of the Local Government Board into the wastepaper basket. (No, no.)

Mrs THOMAS W. THURSFIELD (Leamington) said that the small Unions should do all they could for the nurses, who did not relish the change from a large institution that contained every comfort and convenience to a small Infirmary which was closely mixed up with the



Union, and where the Matron interfered. Nurses should have separate bedrooms, a good sitting-room, and plenty of holidays. She had heard that the Superannuation Act was likely to increase the difficulty of getting good nurses, as it offered no advantages in return for the sums deducted from pay, unless the nurse stayed at the work a great many years. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JOSEPH WALTER (King's Norton) said he came from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and his Board had gone through a similar experience to that of some other Guardians present. They had spent about £50,000 during the last three years in building, and they had remembered and acted upon the advice of the Local Government Board's architect, to keep the Infirmary as self-contained as possible. Their nurses averaged one to every twelve patients, and the Superintendent was paid £60 a year, and deserved more. The Master had nothing to do with the Infirmary, except the care of the outside of the structure, and there was no excuse whatever for the presence of the Matron. He would like to see some practical outcome of the Conference. In the General Order of the Local Government Board, "Nursing of the Sick in Workhouses," 1897, Article III. was as follows:—

ARTICLE III.—(1.) Where at the commencement of this Order the staff of female nurses and assistant nurses in the Workhouse consists of three or more persons, the Guardians shall either appoint a Superintendent Nurse, or, with our consent, direct that one of the nurses shall be a Superintendent Nurse.

(2.) Where at the commencement of this Order there is not a staff of three female nurses and assistant nurses in the Workhouse, but the Guardians subsequently propose that there should be such a staff, and also where any Superintendent Nurse ceases to hold office, the Guardians shall appoint a Superintendent Nurse.

(3.) Any Superintendent Nurse appointed after the commencement of this Order shall, unless we dispense with the requirement, be a person qualified for the appointment by having undergone, for three years at least, a course of instruction in the Medical and Surgical Wards of any Hospital or Infirmary being a Training School for Nurses, and maintaining a Resident Physician or House Surgeon.

He moved—"That the Local Government Board be urged to amend Article III. of the Order of 29th September 1897, by adding after the word 'Infirmary' (Section 3) the words 'containing not less than 150 beds,' and by substituting for the words 'Resident Physician or House Surgeon' the words 'Visiting Medical Officer.'" (Hear, hear.)

In reply to the Chairman, he stated that Miss Gibson had previously approved the resolution.

Miss STACEY (King's Norton) seconded, saying it would meet a difficulty that had been felt in many parts of the country. When the Order came out last year, they at once said, what was the Local Government Board about to make such an Order, for it could not be carried out. But it was most important not to ignore it. Whether they had one, two, or three nurses, those nurses should be well trained. (Hear, hear.) It was with the greatest pleasure she seconded the resolution, and hoped that it would be carried. Many medical men had an aversion to trained nurses, and as long as that was so, how were Guardians to obey the Order of the Local



Government Board? Doctors as well as Guardians required to be enlightened on the subject. (Cheers.)

Mr WETHERED (Local Government Board Inspector) pointed out that Section 3 of Article III. said, "unless we dispense with the requirement." He thought there was a great deal implied by those words. (Hear, hear.)

Mr WINTERBOTHAM (Stroud) said that if Guardians wanted trained nurses they must give them not less than £30 a year. The Matron kicked at that; there was no doubt she did—(laughter)—but she must put up with it. Guardians could not raise her salary. She did not perform any more important duties than the nurse. (Hear, hear.) The Matron must give way. The problem is, "How are you to make her?" (Laughter.)

Rev. T. W. HARVEY (Bristol) hoped that it would not be inferred that that Conference wished to repeal the Order altogether. They only wanted to amend it, so as to meet the difficulties of the transition period. (Hear, hear.) The question of an adequate supply of nurses was a question of money. They must pay a living wage to the nurses. (Hear, hear.)

Colonel CURTIS HAYWARD said they must try and make the nurses as comfortable as possible; but it was not altogether a question of money. Women were by instinct much more migratory than men, and the love of change was more deeply rooted in them.

The CHAIRMAN said it was of enormous importance that those who attended on the sick should be as cheerful as possible. (Hear, hear.) The statement of what was considered a fair wage for a nurse was news to him, and it shocked him. He heard it with shame, and was thinking just what Mr Murray Browne did as to the wages of a good cook. It was sad to see educated ladies receiving such pittances. With regard to squabbles, they were common to human nature, and did not depend upon sex. The best way to avoid them was by a clear definition of the right and powers of all parties. He read the resolution.

Miss GIBSON suggested "200 beds" instead of "150." This was agreed to.

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

Miss GIBSON replying, said that where there was a definite understanding as to what work was to be carried out by the various officials, friction could be obviated. She was glad to say that nurses, if they chose, were not now bound to contribute to the Superannuation Fund. Poor Law work in the Infirmaries was very monotonous, but it was not wholly a question of money and arm-chairs.

The CHAIRMAN proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Gibson and Colonel Browne for reading the papers, saying of Miss Gibson that if there were many ladies like her, men would have to fear not merely physical but intellectual eclipse by the fair sex.

Major-General DAVIES seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried with acclamation.

Colonel CURTIS HAYWARD proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

Mr CORDY MANBY (Kidderminster) seconded.

The CHAIRMAN attributed the success of the Conference to the excellent management of the Hon. Secretary.

Colonel DAVIS proposed a vote of thanks to the Hon. Secretary.

Sir RICHARD HARINGTON seconded, saying that he knew Mr Lloyd Baker's most excellent father many years ago, and he was glad to find that the mantle of the father had fallen on so worthy a son. (Cheers.)

Mr LLOYD BAKER, in reply, said that it was a very great pleasure to him to carry on the work of the Conference.

The proceedings then terminated.

## Northern District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN  
DISTRICT POOR LAW CONFERENCE, HELD AT  
GILSLAND, CUMBERLAND, ON TUESDAY AND  
WEDNESDAY, 12TH AND 13TH JULY 1898.

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*President*—JAMES CROPPER, Esq., Ellergreen, Kendal,  
*Chairman of the Westmoreland County Council.*

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference:—

### CUMBERLAND.

#### BOOTLE—

Sprague, R.  
Yarr, J. W.

#### CARLISLE—

Chalker, Mrs.  
Thomlinson, R. H.  
Savage, Thos.  
Beaty, James.  
Lonsdale, H. B. (Clerk).  
Scott, Wm. (Master).

#### COCKERMOUTH—

King, Miss Mary.  
Williamson, Thomas.  
Birkenshaw, Mrs.

#### PENRITH—

Thompson, R. H. (Chairman).

#### WHITEHAVEN—

Curwen, Rev. A. F. (Chairman).  
Graham, W.  
Finch, S.

#### WIGTON—

Bourke, Rev. Father.

### DURHAM.

#### AUCKLAND—

Peverell, R.  
House, Alderman.  
Foster, Walter J.

### GATESHEAD—

Affleck, R. (Chairman).  
Steel, Rev. James (Vice-Chairman).  
Bell, Mrs.  
Scott, Alderman.  
Craighill, Geo. (Clerk).

### SEDGEFIELD—

Tulip, Alfred.  
Elders, William.  
Lynn, Charles.

### SOUTH SHIELDS—

Atkinson, W. (Chairman).  
Allison, R.  
Hodgson, Mrs.  
Browell, E. J. J.  
Armstrong, J.  
Martin, Joseph.  
Coulson, J. W. (Clerk).

### STOCKTON—

Henderson, Mr.

### LANCHESTER—

Kirkup, Philip.  
Muse, T. J.

### SUNDERLAND—

Armstrong, T.  
Gilbertson, J. J.  
Wraith, G.  
Chambers, Mrs.  
Hodgson, J. W. (Clerk).



## NORTHUMBERLAND.

## ALNWICK—

Bosanquet, C. B. P. (Chairman).  
Walton, H. W. (Clerk).

## CASTLE WARD—

Walker, Rev. Canon.

## NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE—

Rodgers, J. H.  
Mayne, Richard.  
Maxwell, Wm.  
Alder, Thos. S.  
Scholefield, Mrs.  
Gibson, J. W.  
Howliston, R. W.

## TYNEMOUTH—

Eskdale, John.  
Fraser, Mrs.

## TYNEMOUTH—

Murray, W.  
Dodds, Wm.  
Lydon, M.  
Scott, Septimus (Clerk).  
Thompson, W.

## WESTMORELAND.

## KENDAL—

Cropper, James.  
Cropper, Hon. Mrs C.

## YORKSHIRE.

## MIDDLESBOROUGH—

Annand, The Rev. A. P.  
Newby, T. G.  
Walker, H. V. (Assistant Clerk).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSPECTORS.

Dawson, Mr C. A., Newcastle.  
Fust, Mr H. Jenner, Lancaster.

## VISITORS.

Armour, Mr T. H., Gateshead.  
Carr, Mr C. E., Alnwick.

## TUESDAY, 12TH JULY 1898.

Mr CHARLES B. P. BOSANQUET (Rock Hall, Alnwick), Hon. Sec., read the names of those present according to the register signed on entering the meeting hall. He stated that letters apologising for absence had been sent by Mr Mozley (Local Government Board Inspector), Mr J. M. Ridley, Dr Dodd (Newcastle), and Mr Chance (Hon. Sec. of the Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences).

Mr BOSANQUET stated that the Local Government Board had acknowledged the receipt of the three resolutions passed by the Conference in 1897. He had heard nothing more in respect to two of them, but with regard to the third the Board had expressed their willingness to vary their order as to representation of Guardians at the Central Poor Law Conference, and in future Boards over fifty miles from London would be at liberty to send two Guardians and the Clerk to the Central Conference irrespective of distance from London. (Cheers.) He had also received a resolution from the Somerset Poor Law and Rural District Councils Association as to the treatment of tramps, recommending "that the legal dietary for vagrants should comprise a mid-day dole of bread and cheese on leaving the Workhouse, so as to remove all excuses for begging." He regretted that they missed through death the face of their old friend, Mr S. S. Hodgson, of Sunderland. Among the Unions that had as usual appointed representatives was Middlesborough, which was not within the four counties comprised in the Northern Conference District, and last year, rightly or wrongly, he recorded the Middlesborough

members as visitors, but he presumed there would be no objection to allow Middlesborough to be represented at that Conference if that Board wished it. (Hear, hear.) Messrs King & Son had sent him some statements of publications interesting to Guardians. They had been printing and reporting the whole of the Conferences excellently, and Guardians could show their appreciation of this by taking copies. (Hear, hear.)

Mr J. W. GIBSON (Clerk to the Guardians of Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Hon. Treasurer of the Conference, stated that there was a balance in hand at the beginning of the year of £3. 6s. 9d., to which had been added subscriptions from eighty delegates, £8, making £11. 6s. 9d.; and payments for hire of the hall for the meeting and postage and printing of notices amounted to £3. 18s. 3d., leaving a balance in hand of £7. 8s. 6d.

Mr BOSANQUET reported that the Conference Committee met on 31st March, and decided to have only two papers instead of four, to give more time for discussion, and that there should be a selected speaker to open each debate, subsequent speakers to be limited to five minutes.

The Conference signified their approval of the recommendation of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN said they had had interesting preliminary reports from their good friends the Hon. Sec. and the Hon. Treasurer—(Hear, hear)—and he might now be permitted to take up their time for a short review of Poor Law work and other matters of interest to Guardians in the past twelve months. The most important thing was the Workmen's Compensation Act. After much discussion another step had been taken in regard to workmen's compensation for injuries. It affected Guardians in many ways, because there had been times when injured workmen were obliged to resort to poor relief; but now every man, it appeared, who received an injury could claim compensation, unless there was some very grave fault on his own part. It would have its advantages, but these things generally also had disadvantages. There already seemed to be a natural drawing together of employers to get rid of old men and those who were more likely than others to meet with disaster; it would also raise the price of some commodities and it would affect wages, but it would tend to the good of the working class as a whole, when those concerned had settled down to the new conditions. He (the Chairman) would like also to say something as to the result of two Parliamentary Committees. First, as regards children, a great deal had been done to find out the best way of dealing with the large numbers of children who were under the charge of the Guardians of the Unions in the large towns. The Local Government Board had closed Sutton School, and thus compelled the Guardians to find other means of bringing up fifteen hundred children. It would be very interesting to watch how those children were disposed of. Up and down the country experiments were being made, amongst others, by his friend,



Dr Rhodes. (Cheers.) Perhaps it would eventually be found that the best way of dealing with many of the children would be to place them out in the large towns, where, in most cases, their after life would be spent ; it might be quite as good a plan as placing them in the country. It was too early to say anything yet, except that a great step had been taken in the direction of preventing too many children from being gathered together in one place. The next important matter was the report of the Treasury Committee on Old Age Pensions. There and at other Conferences this question had long been considered, but it had now become a kind of party shuttlecock. The report was a very interesting one, and besides an outline of the evidence of the witnesses, it contained a *resumé* of the many schemes, above a hundred altogether, which were brought before the Committee. They might be divided shortly into four classes, the first by which every one, whether rich or poor, should receive a weekly allowance at the age of sixty-five years. There were, according to the census, just under two millions of people over sixty-five years living in England, so that £12 a year to each of them would amount to a huge sum, and no Government would ever propose it. The next was a scheme proposed by Canon Blackley, and supported by Mr Chamberlain, that any man under twenty-five years of age who would put down £2. 10s., and afterwards pay 10s. a year, should at a certain age receive 5s. a week from the State. There were other schemes on kindred lines, but all attended with great difficulties. First of all, in an active community like this, a scheme which would only mature in forty years' time, was hardly likely to commend itself to the public. It was not a great bait to the electorate ; few young people looked forward forty years. Something more immediate was wanted. A third set of schemes proposed to work the pensions through the Friendly Societies. They were interesting schemes, but they practically involved that Government must guarantee the stability of certain societies, and that meant great responsibility and risk. There was another difficulty which affected all the schemes, and that was that the Government and the whole body politic was rather rolling in wealth just at present. There was over a hundred millions in the savings banks, and for Government to take in hand further enormous sums to put out at interest was a task which wise statesmen would shun. The last class of proposals was that of Mr Lionel Holland, that persons who had been members of Friendly Societies for a certain period of their lives should be entitled to old age pensions. It would be extremely troublesome and expensive, if not impossible, to keep a record of membership and to carry out the necessary inspection of accounts, and the end of the whole matter was that, in spite of the efforts of the Committee and the extraordinary amount of evidence they had collected, the Committee could not find any scheme or proposal which satisfied the conditions imposed. He was not sure that any one reading the Report would differ from the conclusions arrived at by the Committee. Many of them had hoped that some



solution of the problem could have been found, for it would have greatly relieved local expenditure if some imperial pension could have been paid at a certain age. He could not help thinking that further demands would be made on politicians to establish a pension system analogous to that found in some foreign countries. If it was jointly controlled by local and imperial officers, some fairly accurate idea might be obtained as to the character and needs of those who applied for pensions. He had only one more point to mention—namely, the question of weakmindedness and lunacy. Whatever the cause, the number of sufferers is continually increasing. The past year had seen the numbers go up by 2,600; and in the year before that there was an increase of 2,900. He looked on that with the deepest regret; the cost was something enormous, and he hoped that some simpler mode of dealing with the senile demented and the epileptics might be found, and that the enormous lunatic asylums might not go on extending. The weakminded and epileptic might in most cases be maintained comfortably and economically without those special institutions. (Hear, hear.)

## THE ADMINISTRATION OF OUT-RELIEF IN URBAN DISTRICTS.

BY GEORGE CRAIGHILL,

*Union Clerk, Gateshead.*

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THE administration of out-relief, whether in urban or rural districts, is one of the most important duties devolving upon Guardians of the Poor. The circumstances attending the administration of out-relief are, however, different in towns to what they are in the country.

Applicants for relief in country districts may in many cases have lived all their lives in the places where they apply, and consequently their characters and circumstances are well known. In town districts, on the other hand, there is much changing of residence from a variety of causes, and consequently reliable information as to character and circumstances is not so easily obtained—if it can be obtained at all—which is not always the case.

In towns, out-relief is often administered by Relief Committees, which is not the case in country

districts. Depression in trade, and disputes between capital and labour, affect town districts more severely than country districts. Other instances might be given, but perhaps enough has been stated to show that the circumstances attending the administration of out-relief are not the same in towns as in the country.

It is, perhaps, outside the strict scope of this paper to offer observations on the general question of out-relief, but a few brief remarks on it may be of service in considering its administration in urban districts. Sometimes a conclusion is expressed that as the amount granted in outdoor relief to a case is often less than the cost would be to maintain the same individuals in the Workhouse, there is therefore a distinct gain to the community in the former method being adopted. There are, however, far-reaching effects to be carefully considered before this view can be accepted. It is desirable that public opinion amongst our industrial population should, as far as possible, realise that it is better to avoid coming upon the rates, and, as outdoor relief interferes least with the habits of the people, so there is great facility in becoming confirmed to the habit of relying upon it. Not only this, but the fact that a neighbour or neighbours is receiving outdoor relief may blunt the edge of effort, and tend to induce in others a desire to get it. The wider out-relief is spread, the more likely are the feelings of neighbours to be deadened to that sense of responsibility and independence which would nerve them to self-supporting efforts.

All Guardians know that it is their duty to relieve the destitute with sufficient relief. It should be borne in mind, however, that it is destitution which is to be relieved. A person may be poor and yet not be destitute. Nobody can be destitute without being poor.

Applications to the Guardians, whether for indoor or outdoor relief, are made through the Relieving

Officer of the district, a part of whose duty it is to keep an Application and Report Book. It is very essential that this book should always contain the fullest particulars as to the circumstances of the applicant and his family ; the dates of all the officer's visits to the applicant's house ; the weekly earnings of each member of the family, whether they are living at home or away from it, and any other income from clubs or other sources. The personal attendance of applicants, unless they are physically unable to attend, should always be insisted upon when the applications are considered. Guardians are thus enabled to question applicants fully as to their means of obtaining a livelihood. Only cases where all the particulars have been entered in the Application and Report Book should be dealt with by the Guardians. Any cases where these particulars have not been obtained can be, and should be, dealt with by the Relieving Officer. He will thus have time to inquire into and report fully upon the circumstances of the case to the next meeting of the Committee, when the case could be considered and dealt with by them.

While indoor relief may be given by Guardians to any kind of case, outdoor relief can only be given subject to the Orders in force in each particular Union. It sometimes happens that in cases brought before them for consideration Guardians do not feel disposed to act upon the recommendation of the Relieving Officer of the district, who has visited the case, and is aware of the circumstances connected with it. An instance of this kind is submitted, as follows :— A woman with five children, whose ages ranged from eleven to two years, applied for relief a fortnight after her husband's death. She had received £20 insurance money and £10 from a club on the death of her husband. There were living at home with her a son of twenty who gave his mother 13s. a week ; a daughter, eighteen, who was earning 5s. a week ;



a son, sixteen, earning 5s. a week ; and a son, fourteen, earning 3s. a week. The applicant also had a small huckster's shop. The income of the house, irrespective of the earnings of the shop, was 26s. a week at the time of application. The Relieving Officer objected to the granting of outdoor relief on the ground that a woman who had received £30 within a fortnight of the date of her application, and into whose house there was an admitted weekly income of 26s. going, over and above anything made in the shop, could not, or should not be destitute. On that occasion the Relief Committee adjourned the case for a month. At the end of the month the applicant again applied, and the Relieving Officer again objected, when the application was again adjourned, this time for a fortnight. At the end of the fortnight she again applied for the third time, and as there is a saying in the North that "the third time is catchy time," she succeeded on that occasion in getting the Guardians to grant her 5s. a week for ten weeks, although the Relieving Officer again objected to out-relief being given. At the expiration of the ten weeks for which the relief had been granted, the case came up in the ordinary way, amongst all other cases on the books, for revision by the Relief Committee. The Relieving Officer again pointed out the income going into the house, and the Application and Report Book again showed full detailed particulars. The Relief Committee, however, decided to continue the relief. On the occasion of the next revision the case was again brought forward. The income of the house had increased by 2s. a week owing to one of the family getting an increase of wages. The applicant, who still had the shop, then stated that she was not making anything by it. The Relieving Officer again requested the Committee to notice the income going into the house. The relief was, however, continued, no reduction being made on account of the extra 2s. a week going into the house.

The applicant some time afterwards gave up keeping the shop. On the next revision it was found that the income had increased by another 2s., making the total income 30s. a week. As on previous occasions the Relieving Officer again directed special attention to the earnings going into the house, and on this occasion the Relief Committee discontinued the relief. Since this was done the shop has been started again.

A consideration of the circumstances of a case like this would appear to show that where there is a difference of view between a Relief Committee and a Relieving Officer as to whether or not out-relief should be granted, the circumstances of the case should be considered, either by an enlarged Committee or by the whole Board. Where neither of these courses is taken, it is recommended that a procedure, to be subsequently referred to, be adopted.

It is obvious that it would be pleasanter and easier for a Relieving Officer to concur in the views of a Relief Committee, however wrong those views may appear to him to be, rather than run the risk of incurring the displeasure of the Committee. Any Guardian who considers the subject will not fail to note that it is against a Relieving Officer's material interest to offend Guardians. When these considerations are borne in mind, Guardians will be ready to recognise the extremely difficult and delicate nature of the position in which a conscientious Relieving Officer may sometimes find himself placed. On one hand, from his knowledge of the circumstances of a case, he may be perfectly satisfied that it is not a case for out-relief. He finds the Relief Committee, however, while they do not in any way challenge the facts which he has submitted to them, or doubt the accuracy of the observations which he also places before them, yet grant out-relief. He may be obliged to pay every week public money to persons whom he is satisfied ought not to get it. He realises that a wrong is being done, and that he is

made the instrument by which it is done. If he keeps bringing the case before the Relief Committee, they may regard him as officious, hard, and as seeking to reflect upon their judgment. On the other hand, knowing that his remuneration and prospects depend upon the Guardians, he may be tempted to leave things alone. Surely this is an embarrassing position for any one so placed. When this is remembered, it is not too much to hope that Guardians will realise and appreciate at his true worth, the sterling value of a man, who will not weigh his own material interest against public duty, but who voluntarily undertakes the, to him, very distasteful task of opposing the Relief Committee, when he thinks they are going to make a mistake.

It would be an easy matter, as one can see, for a Relieving Officer to make himself popular amongst those who apply for out-relief by recommending Guardians to grant it, even in cases where it should not be given. The recipients would probably say "he was such a canny man," and it is only human nature to like to be well spoken of by others. Therefore, while it is not asserted that there are cases of this kind, the point of view is presented for consideration, that there is an inducement to a Relieving Officer which makes more in the direction of his recommending the granting of out-relief than its refusal.

In a large number of cases which come before a Relief Committee for their consideration, there are circumstances which it is almost impossible for a Relieving Officer to put into words, and yet the Relieving Officer often feels that if the Relief Committee had had the same opportunity of visiting the case, and seen what he had seen, they would appreciate his difficulty, and be of the same view as himself. In cases where the Relief Committee consider out-relief should be granted, and the Relieving Officer is strongly of opinion that it should not be granted, it is recom-



mended that the Relief Committee should depute one of their number to visit the case in company with the Relieving Officer, the Relieving Officer dealing with the case until the next meeting, when the member who has visited the case could present his report. This has been done in Gateshead in cases of this kind, and the result has been that in every case so dealt with, the Relieving Officer's view has been upheld. An example may be interesting.

An old man and his wife aged respectively eighty-five and seventy-three, lived in one room. They had living with them a son of forty who was of weak intellect. There were three daughters, two of whom were married, and the other was at service. They were not able amongst them, they stated, to keep their aged parents. The only articles of furniture in the room occupied by the old people and their son were a chair, a box, a small table, and a bed. The room was in a dirty condition and the stench was very great, so much so that on one occasion the Relieving Officer had to stand outside the door to speak to the people inside the room. The Relieving Officer objected on several occasions to out-relief being given on account of the filthy condition in which the recipients were living, but as the old woman invariably came to the Relief Committee clean and tidily got up for the occasion, the views expressed by some members of the Committee were that it was a shame to force the old people into the Workhouse, and that it would be cheaper to keep them outside. Eventually a member was deputed to go with the Relieving Officer. The result was a report that the case could only be properly dealt with in the Workhouse. Out-relief was at once discontinued, a Workhouse Order was offered, and refused. Since then the old man and his wife have been maintained by the daughters who were previously unable to keep their parents.

In large towns a Relief Committee should not

always consist exclusively of Guardians from the particular area dealt with by the Committee. While there may be advantages in having Guardians with a knowledge of a locality, there is also an advantage in having Guardians free from the influences of a locality. It is suggested, therefore, that a Relief Committee should be composed partly of Guardians from the particular locality dealt with, and partly of Guardians from another locality in the same town. If this suggestion is adopted it should be applied to all the Relief Committees in a town, and a rota should be made, so that each Guardian in that town would serve in rotation on the different Relief Committees in it. The advantages which are claimed for this suggestion are, that it would be beneficial to the Guardians themselves in giving them a wider scope and more experience, and that it would tend towards a more equal administration of out-relief throughout any town in which it was adopted.

It is submitted that out-relief should only be given to persons of good character. To give it to persons whose destitution has been caused by their own folly or misdoing is practically to relieve them of some of the consequences of misconduct. Further, it would be an example, if not an encouragement, to other people, that they need be neither prudent nor provident.

Out-relief should only be given to old people who are either capable of looking after themselves and keeping their houses and themselves clean, or have some one to do it for them.

When out-relief is given to able-bodied widows with children, it should be seen that the mothers are competent to bring up their children in the ways of morality and industry.

Out-relief should not be given to people unless they live in tolerably decent surroundings. In most towns there are certain places which it is no exaggeration to

describe as plague spots. When the present position and future prospects of the young, brought up amidst dirt, squalor, and obscenity, are considered, it will be agreed that Guardians should do all they can to prevent the demoralisation of these poor unfortunate little children. It is recommended, therefore, that any out-relief which may be given be made entirely conditional on decent surroundings.

With reference to deserted wives, it is very difficult in towns to get satisfactory evidence that there is not collusion between husband and wife, and that the wife is not receiving money from her husband. It is easy for money to be sent through the post without a Relieving Officer knowing about it. It is suggested that careful inquiry be made to ascertain upon what terms the parties lived together, and also as to the character which each party bears. Where the husband is within reach of the law, it is recommended that Guardians apply the Workhouse test, and cause proceedings to be instituted against him for maintenance. Where, however, it is ascertained that the husband is abroad and beyond the pale of the law, and it is clear that he is not sending money to support his wife and family, and there is no collusion between the parties, and the wife is a decent hard-working woman of good character, then in such a case, it is submitted, she should be regarded and treated, so long as her circumstances do not change, as being in the position of a widow, and eligible for out-relief. When this is stated, however, it should be remembered that no other class of case offers such facility for deception and imposition. Extreme care is therefore recommended in dealing with these cases, and it is only where all the circumstances are entirely free from any doubt that the applicant should be eligible for out-relief.

When an able-bodied man, who is unable to work on account of sickness, applies for out-relief, and it is ascertained that he cannot get along without assist-



ance, and that he endeavoured to make provision for himself, it is recommended that out-relief should be granted, if the man can be properly treated and attended to at home. If he cannot be properly nursed at home, it would be better for all concerned to take the man into the Hospital, and relieve his wife and family outside in kind.

To thrifty able-bodied men with families, unable to work through continued illness, but who have partially provided for themselves by means of clubs or other provident institutions, the Gateshead Guardians have for some time freely given out-relief. Where, however, the man has not been thrifty, their practice is, to offer him the Workhouse, and relieve his wife and family outside to prevent breaking up the home.

Whenever and wherever out-relief is given, regard ought always to be had to thrift, character, and the natural and legal obligations of relatives. No thriftless person or bad character should get out-relief. Where there are relatives who can contribute to the maintenance of the members of their family needing help, they should do so, without the case coming through the medium of the Guardians. Where, however, they neglect this obligation, and their relatives become chargeable, it should be seen that they contribute all they are able towards the cost of maintenance. Accurate information as to earnings can usually be obtained on application to employers. Whenever persons who are able to pay neglect to do so, legal proceedings should be instituted to enforce payment.

In granting out-relief care should be taken not to stereotype the amount of relief given. For example, 2s. 6d. a week may be sufficient for an old man living with a relative, but it would hardly be sufficient for another old man, similarly situated, except that he had to rent a room. The latter must naturally require more income to live upon, seeing that he has rent and fuel to provide, which is not the case with the

other old man. It is recommended that great care should be exercised in granting out-relief, but when it is granted it should be sufficient.

An important point connected with the administration of out-relief in all places, but especially in towns, is to get good Relieving Officers. However good and assiduous Guardians may be, it will be admitted that an incompetent Relieving Officer is a serious drawback. It is recommended, therefore, that in filling up these appointments from time to time, Guardians will take into consideration the qualifications of head and heart requisite to properly perform a Relieving Officer's duties, the fiduciary trust reposed in the officer, and fix the remuneration at a rate which will attract and retain good men.

It is desirable that Guardians and Relieving Officers should always realise that a proper administration of out-relief depends very much upon their working well together. The officers should fully recognise the position and authority of the Guardians, and the Guardians should remember the difficult duties and responsibilities of the officers. A close touch between the Relieving Officers and the Clerk of a Union is also recommended. There are frequently points cropping up in a town, as to which a Relieving Officer may feel he would like to have another opinion besides his own. The practice recommended has been adopted in Gateshead for some time, and it is the view of the officers there, that it has been beneficial to the public service and helpful to those engaged in its administration.

In Gateshead Union, where some of the views set forth in this paper have been in practice for some years, the result has been a satisfactory administration of out-relief. In 1881, with a census population of 106,000, before the practice referred to was in operation, 22 persons in every thousand were in receipt of out-relief. In 1898, with a population from the

Registrar-General's Returns of 161,000, only 11 persons in every thousand are in receipt of out-relief.

It will be noted with satisfaction that whilst the population has rapidly increased, the number of persons receiving out-relief has very substantially decreased. This result should not be ascribed to a policy of sending people into the Workhouse, because in 1881 in every thousand of the population four and seven-tenths were in the Workhouse, whereas in 1898 the ratio is practically the same, being four and eight-tenths persons in every thousand.

Since 1881 there has been a gradual decrease in the cost of out-relief at Gateshead. In 1881 it was £9,453. In 1898 it is £7,464, nearly £2,000 less. In the ten years ended at Lady Day 1888, £97,899 were granted in out-relief. In the ten years ended at Lady Day 1898, £90,065 were granted in out-relief, being £7,834 less, which is equal to a decrease of £783 in *each* of the last ten years as compared with the ten years previous. These statistics are not given with any idea of lauding the Gateshead Union. They are submitted as showing, that in a Union where some of the views suggested in this paper have been in actual operation, the practical results have been satisfactory.

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### DISCUSSION.

Mr R. H. HOWLISTON (Relieving Officer of Newcastle) said that although his experience in the administration of the Poor Law could hardly be said to be of any lengthened duration, it had been sufficiently long to enable him to give his cordial assent to the paper which had just been read. So much had been written and spoken on the subject of relief, that he thought it would be a wise departure if at those Conferences some of the officers entrusted with its distribution could be put in the pillory, as it were, and heckled by the Conference. If the Poor Law was to be altered, those who had the practical working of it should be called as witnesses. This was not the occasion to make political speeches, or to enunciate doctrines of political economy, but he could not but deprecate those who urged



certain opinions. He regarded the enterprising capitalist as the best friend of the poor, and it was by sobriety and thrift that the great incubus of pauperism would be removed. So long as relief was left to popularly elected Guardians there would be some measure of out-relief. But he had no hesitation in saying that the present system put a premium on vice, while it often inflicted on the deserving poor a punishment they ought not to have to bear. Drunken families frequently received relief, while respectable families were not properly treated, for the former made a business of deceiving the Guardians, while the latter, whose poverty might be the result of dire misfortune, showed a praiseworthy reluctance to apply for relief. He deprecated a wavering and faltering system, couched in wavering and faltering terms. In election addresses they met with pleas for a general system of relief, but no general system would do, there must be classification as to character both of the indoor and outdoor poor. It should be used, not in any harsh way, but as a remedial and corrective measure. There should be regulations for relief which should never be departed from except in extreme cases, and if they were carried out in the spirit of the paper read by Mr Craighill they would soon see gratifying results. He could not understand the unwillingness of some Guardians to make Workhouse orders. They seemed to regard it as the hardest sentence in the Poor Law. He desired to test it, not by the imagination of the popular novelist, but by experience of cases, and he came to the conclusion that it was the best course in the interest of the recipients, who might not have a proper place to live in, or any one to tend them. It was not easy to define destitution, but it was not right that the task should filter down until its definition rested with the Relieving Officer. Taking the term to mean the absence of means to provide proper food and clothing and other necessities, it described a condition of things which, in his opinion, could only be properly relieved by an order for the House. These orders had a great moral effect on low districts, and in cases where Guardians had decided not to grant relief to widows within three months of the husband's death, there had been more funeral reform than could have been accomplished by a lifetime of lecturing. Regulations for relief should be always couched in negative language, "Thou shalt not." He had yet to meet the man who had been engaged in the slums of the great cities and had not come to that conclusion. It might be said those were old arguments. They were, but they wanted repeating, for Boards of Guardians were constantly changing. He would like to hear something better than the old answer that it was cheaper to give out-relief than Workhouse orders. That might be a very good bottle for electioneering, but it contained very bad wine. Out-relief was wasteful, and could not be defended on grounds of political economy. It might be justified on grounds of expediency, but that was the lowest ground of all. He was not unmindful of the way in which the poor lived, and he had seen heroic efforts which he would not soon forget. Having quoted the

94th Psalm, the speaker said much mischief was wrought by law, indiscriminate out-relief being one example. One great cause of pauperism was intemperance, and the Workhouse test tended to make people more careful in their habits. He was glad that the result of the other Conferences seemed to be a decrease in the expenditure on out-relief.

The Rev. Canon CURWEN entirely concurred with the previous speaker as to the mischief done by out-relief. Relieving Officers were sometimes unable to investigate applications thoroughly, as their district was too large. They should endeavour to have an adequate staff of Relieving Officers, and pay them enough to attract the best men. It was a policy that would pay in the long run.

Mrs FRASER (Tynemouth) agreed with Mr Craighill that Guardians should work in co-operation with their Relieving Officers, but they should not blindly follow them. In her Union they had one of the best and shrewdest Relieving Officers.

Mr MURRAY (Cockermouth) said Mr Howliston harped on the drink question, but they had to take things as they stood, and if the Government invited people to drink to excess, speaking as a teetotalter, Guardians would be going outside their province to propose to punish people by depriving them of their rightful relief—relief not a privilege, but theirs by the law of the land. With regard to widows with children, he would rather grant them 7s. 6d. a week than see the children brought into the Workhouse. He would be glad to see Guardians empowered by law to visit the poor, and not be obliged, as they were, to rely on the Relieving Officer's reports. Relieving Officers moved in a very narrow circle. Mr Howliston was very confident, but he (Mr Murray) could tell him it was not always drink that brought people on the rates. Guardians must deal honestly and fairly with the people who applied to them, whatever the cause of the applicant's poverty.

Mr THOMPSON (Tynemouth) said that a long experience had convinced him that indoor relief was better than outdoor relief, with a very few exceptions. He was sorry to find that notwithstanding the national prosperity, pauperism had really decreased very slightly. He had an impression that intemperance had a great deal to do with it.

Mr MUSE (Lanchester) said he had been seventeen years a Guardian, and he contended that the hope of reducing pauperism must be in better training of the rising generation.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Sunderland) said that the paper had a special interest for the Board to which he belonged. While the Gateshead Board had been making considerable progress in the reduction of outdoor relief, his own Board had been going in the opposite direction. As Mr Dawson (Local Government Board) had recently pointed out to the Board, the Workhouse test was a scientific test, but new Guardians were always a little more "humane" than old ones, and they hesitated to give orders for the House. It arose from want of experience. Both Relieving Officers and Guardians ought to be much more careful in



investigating cases, and when they got hold of a genuine case ample relief ought to be given. He was not sure that the plan of mixed Relief Committees would do, except in a modified form. The weak point of the Poor Law was outdoor relief.

Mr RODGERS (Newcastle) said he was very glad that Mr Craighill mentioned the constitution of Relief Committees. He hoped that in Newcastle they would shortly have mixed Relief Committees. The poor were so well acquainted with the Guardians that they went and appealed to them at their residences, and placed them in a very awkward position. The Guardians were an elective body, as they all knew, sometimes to their sorrow, when polling day came round, and they could not always get an impartial opinion from Guardians. They had rules at Newcastle regarding out-relief. Applications for out-relief by deserted women, or women whose husbands were in prison, were not discussed by the Relief Committee at all, but sent to the whole Board. Such rules had been found very beneficial in Newcastle. In considering the causes of the decline of pauperism, credit must be given to the work of the trades-unions in assisting sick and unemployed members.

Rev. Father BOURKE (Wigton) said that while Guardians looked at the matter from the legal point of view, the poor often thought that because they had paid rates they were entitled to relief, but they should be told that they had no ground for relief except destitution. Relieving Officers were apt to pander to popularity, especially in small towns where every one knew them. They should be on their guard against encouraging immorality and indecency. A couple purchased a cottage, and lived in it till old age prevented the man from doing any more work. If he went to the Guardians for relief, he would be told, "We can't relieve you; you have property." Another couple that spent their lives in extravagance came to want, and the Relieving Officer was bound to help them. He said, give as little out-relief as you can, but treat the people who deserve it in the most humane manner possible.

Mr DODDS (Tynemouth) said the paper amounted to a condemnation of the work of Guardians as a whole. He did not believe in "jamming" people into the Workhouse. Many of the defects of the present system arose from the neglect of detail by Guardians. Many respectable people were recommended (by clergymen especially), and when their cases were examined they were found to have money. Guardians should try and find out the pros and cons of a case. Cleanliness should be insisted upon as one of the conditions of out-relief. Where possible, old people should be assisted in keeping their home together, for it was found that if they were compelled to come into the House, even where there was special accommodation for aged married couples, they gradually drifted apart. There were lots of old people who could get along very well if they were granted out-relief of two or three shillings a week.

Mr DAWSON (Local Government Board) said they were much



indebted to Mr Craighill for the paper, and to Mr Howliston as the selected speaker. There were three difficulties in regard to relief. First, that relief as administered by Committees, and not by the whole Board, did not tend to uniformity of practice. As to the constitution of committees, he had recently brought that matter before the Newcastle Board, and he was glad to hear that there was a probability of his suggestion being acted upon, and that the committees should be representative of the whole Union. There should not be any difficulty in this in the large towns. Pressure upon individual Guardians to grant relief would be gradually done away with. It would be well if Guardians would make a rigid rule never to receive any application personally. They should be handed over to the Relieving Officer, who was the responsible person. Much depended upon the proper visitation of the cases, not only at the time of granting and renewing the orders, but at frequent and irregular intervals, for if a person knew that an officer was coming everything would be spick and span, and if the man was said to be an invalid he would in all human probability be in bed, but be out, be up and about in the afternoon of the same day. In large towns they should have a superintendent of out-relief, or cross-visitor, whose time would be exclusively occupied in visiting. As to the future, he hoped that no Guardians would allow their Relieving Officers to hand the relief to children. It was the worst thing possible, for it familiarised the young with the idea of receiving relief. If people were too ill to go to the station for it, the Relieving Officer was bound to take it to them.

Rev. A. P. ANNAND (Middlesbrough) thought that Guardians might do something to check the lavish and disgraceful expenditure upon funerals. They refused out-relief at Middlesbrough if much expenditure had been incurred. He had known cases where widows with children drew £12 from a club, and spent £10 or £11 on the funeral, which was made the occasion for feasting all their friends. They were encouraged in this by the undertaker, who took the chair and drank "the health" of the dead man.

Mr PEVERELL (Auckland) said that once in six months his Board visited the chief centres of their Union, and inquired into the circumstances of the recipients of relief. Guardians often interfered between the Relieving Officer and the applicants for relief, but the Board had a rule that all cases must be investigated by the Relieving Officer. A few days ago he (the speaker) visited a man who was suffering from rheumatic fever, and he found the house in such a filthy and malodorous state that he had the man removed to the Workhouse, and the sanitary inspector was called in.

Mr ARMOUR (Gateshead) expressed the opinion that out-relief was very insidious, and sapped the independence of the poor. Indiscriminate charity was also answerable for the same result. If owing to temporary distress pecuniary assistance was necessary, it should be given through the trained officers of the Poor Law service.

Drink was not the only influence towards pauperism ; immorality was a most diabolical force in the same direction.

Mr ESKDALE (Tynemouth) said he had listened to the speeches with great patience, in fact he had come to the conclusion that he was not such an impatient fellow as he had thought he was. The paper appeared to be an extremely nice one, but there were one or two circumstances connected with it. Gateshead was evidently a model Union—Mr Craighill asserted as much, and the subsequent speakers confirmed him ; and the general effect of the paper, and remarks subsequent to it, seemed to be this, “What is the use of having Guardians at all ?” (Hear, hear, and laughter). They were a lot of people who pandered for votes and had no aptitude for Poor Law work whatever. Relieving Officers, who had evidently accomplished all the virtues, should have the sole dominion over the poor. Really, he had been a Guardian a good many years, and he had not a great love for Relieving Officers. He always felt that the Relieving Officer stood between the poor and the Board, and said to them, “You shan’t see the Board ; I won’t allow you to.” And it was a singular fact that very often the needy did not get to the Board table. According to the paper, before a person could be relieved at all he must have a “character.” Destitution does not meet the case. If a man is destitute, but has not a “character,” he is not to be relieved. Oh, no, he is to be hungered a little. The Guardians are to say, “You shall not bite for the next eight and forty hours.” He emphatically protested against such a view of their functions. The Poor Law had nothing to do with a destitute person’s past career, and nothing to do with the punishment of vices. If a person was hungry they must give him food to eat. But they were advised that afternoon, first, to be vigorous in punishing past misdeeds ; secondly, to be very tenderly in agreement with the Relieving Officer for fear that functionary should not get his “screw” advanced. He had been a Guardian sixteen or eighteen years, and considered himself as capable as any Relieving Officer in deciding whether a person was well or badly off. The electorate was quick to decide between the cold-blooded apathy of the Relieving Officer and the kindly sentiment of the intelligent Guardian.

Mr HOUSE (Auckland) said that any Relieving Officers present must have felt flattered, if not saintly, until Mr Eskdale’s excellent speech. The paper and discussion, as usual, resolved themselves into “Indoor *versus* outdoor relief,” but he wished to point out that it was not the adoption of the Workhouse test that had decreased pauperism. It was the beneficent work of such bodies as the Miners’ Permanent Relief Fund. (Cheers.) Let the Conference acknowledge that the working men of the North of England were making the best of their opportunities to improve their condition and make them self-reliant. (Hear, hear.)

Alderman SCOTT (Gateshead) said he had not been a Guardian many months, but he heartily thanked Mr Craighill for his paper, as



to which he would not say much, coming from the same town. Gateshead was not divided into wards or sections. Every member could attend the Relief Committee, and they were not subject to the influences which had been mentioned by some of the speakers in regard to applications for relief.

The CHAIRMAN said that Guardians certainly should not allow applications for relief to be made to them personally. Mr Eskdale's question about the utility of Boards of Guardians was a question that might be asked of all bodies, from Parliament downwards. Public opinion was brought to bear upon affairs through these elective bodies, which had been found on the whole to work well in the public interest. He was glad to think that Poor Law Conferences in general, and that at Gilsland in particular, had been the means of achieving some reforms, amongst them a greater uniformity of administration. The working men of the North of England had doubtless done a great deal for themselves of late years, but in the working class, as in every other class, there were unworthy members who needed the reminder that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat." Guardians had to see that the worthless were not allowed to encroach upon their neighbours. They had to hold the balance evenly between the ratepayers and the poor.

Mr CRAIGHILL did not think it necessary to reply.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to him for his paper, and to Mr Howliston for his speech upon it.

"The Practice at different Workhouses as to Portions of Food for the Inmates" was the next matter on the agenda.

Mr BOSANQUET said the practice of giving a fixed quantity of food to each inmate leads to great waste ; while on the other hand to give every inmate just as much as he wanted required a very close supervision to prevent unfairness.

Mr CRAIGHILL said that at Gateshead it was found that the fixed portions resulted in great waste, and the Master now gave the inmates the quantity required by them and charged accordingly, and not on the fixed dietary scale. The amount left over from day to day was added up and credited to the quantity in store. If any Guardian or official would like to visit Gateshead Union, the Master would be happy to give them any information.

The CHAIRMAN doubted whether they could legally depart from the dietary scale.

Mr DAWSON (Local Government Board) said he thought Chorlton Union was the first to break the law in that respect.

Dr J. MILSON RHODES (Chorlton) said he was the naughty boy who said "Shan't" to the Local Government Board when they directed that inmates should have such and such a quantity. It was a bad example to the children, for one thing. By the new system they were saving nearly a ton of bread per month in Chorlton. He was convinced it was a monstrous system to portion out bread and also milk for the sick in that way. In the old times when no reporters



were allowed at Guardians' meetings, and there was no publicity, great corruption prevailed among Poor Law administrators. But now with the increased honesty of public life the Government could safely allow the Guardians to give the inmates just as much food as they wanted. It was a perfect scandal that when people were starving outside there should be this waste of bread in the Workhouses. One outcome of the action of the Chorlton Board was the appointment of a Departmental Committee which he hoped would shortly report on the question.

The CHAIRMAN—If you can do that, there is no reason why other Boards should not do so. You have not been put in prison or punished in any way, I suppose? (Laughter).

Dr RHODES—Prison to come, sir.

Mr DAWSON (Local Government Board) asked the Conference to wait for the Departmental Committee's Report.

Dr RHODES stated, in reply to a member, that the Board had improved the dietary.

Mr JENNER FUST (Local Government Board) said it would be hardly right for him to discuss the desirability of the system before the Committee had reported. Besides wishing to secure that every inmate had enough food, the object of the fixed dietary scale was to prevent the able-bodied pauper from having too much. There was also the question of keeping accounts. As to the sick wards, the medical officers had power to prevent waste, for the food there was entirely under their control.

Dr RHODES said they did not apply the *ad lib.* dietary to the able-bodied.

Mrs CHARLES CROPPER inquired whether there was any Union represented there in which the children breakfasted at half-past six, and got nothing more until noon.

Dr RHODES said the Chorlton children breakfasted about seven (according to the time of the year), and had something for lunch.

Mr DAWSON (Local Government Board) said it would be better for them to take breakfast later, and no lunch.

Mrs CROPPER did not think that the children over nine were allowed to breakfast later than 6.30.

Two or three members stated that in their Union the children were allowed to have bread for lunch ; and the opinion was expressed and endorsed in various quarters of the room that growing children ought to have something to eat between breakfast time and dinner.

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WEDNESDAY, 13th JULY.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT YEAR.

It was unanimously resolved on the motion of Mr Eskdale, that the Conference be held next year at Gilsland.

It was also resolved that the date be left to the Committee, subject to this limitation that it be held on Monday and Tuesday instead of Tuesday and Wednesday as heretofore.

The Committee was appointed as follows :—

DURHAM—

Mr Peverell.  
Mr Browell.  
Mr George Craighill.

NORTHUMBERLAND—

Mr Rodgers.  
Alderman Spence.  
Mr Eskdale.  
The Rev. Canon Walker.  
Mr Gibson (*Hon. Treasurer*) } *Ex-officio.*  
Mr Bosanquet (*Hon. Sec.*) }

CUMBERLAND—

The Rev. A. F. Curwen.  
Mrs Chalker.  
Mr J. M. Ridley.

WESTMORELAND—

Mr James Cropper (*President*).  
Mrs Lloyd Wilson.

The President (Mr James Cropper) and the Hon. Secretary (Mr Charles B. P. Bosanquet) were re-elected with acclamation, and votes of thanks for their past services.

The PRESIDENT expressed a wish that there should be a Vice-President, and he proposed the Rev. Mr Curwen for that office.

This was carried unanimously.

Mr BOSANQUET also thanked the meeting for re-electing him.

Mr GIBSON was re-elected Hon. Treasurer, and thanked the meeting.

The Delegates to the Central Poor Law Conference were re-elected, viz., the Hon. Mrs Charles Cropper, Mr Craighill, and Mr Beattie.

Mr CRAIGHILL stated that the last Central Conference had a peculiar interest for the Northern District, inasmuch as Mr Gibson, their Hon. Treasurer, and Mr Fisher, a Guardian of Gateshead, were selected to read papers there.

The CHAIRMAN said some Boards of Guardians were unwilling to send representatives to the Conference at Gilsland. He did not know that anything he could say would reach those Boards, but he ventured to say they were probably just the Boards which wanted a little enlightenment. It would be advantageous to them to extend their knowledge by a journey to Gilsland, where they would rub shoulders with the representatives of some of the best Unions, and could discuss matters in a friendly way with Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Mr ESKDALE suggested that the Local Government Board In-

spectors should advise all Boards of Guardians to send delegates to Gilsland.

Mr DAWSON said he had done so whenever the question had been raised.

Dr RHODES read the following paper :—

## NURSING IN WORKHOUSES.

BY DR J. MILSON RHODES,

*Chairman of Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylum Committee.*

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WHEN I promised to address this Conference on Workhouse Nursing, the fact of my old friend, Dr Hall of Carlisle, having read a paper on the same subject had escaped my memory. It was, as no doubt many of you remember, an excellent paper, and admirably stated the case for the employment of trained nurses in Workhouses. Fortunately, so far as the Guardians are concerned, there is no need to advocate their employment, for we are now, thanks to the new order, just as much bound to have trained nurses as Workhouse Masters and Matrons; and even if the law did not compel the employment of trained nurses, there are very few Boards so benighted as not to see that every one is benefited and nobody injured thereby.

### BENEFIT TO THE RATEPAYERS.

No one derives more benefit than the ratepayers, for those who have carefully studied this question know that a large number of cases remain a shorter time in hospital on account of the better care and attention the patients receive, and are therefore a shorter period a burden on the rates. Another way in which trained nurses are economical is the use of medical stores. The waste of lint, oil, silk, stimulants, and very many other articles, was, under the old system, nothing less than a scandal.



## BENEFIT TO THE PATIENTS.

That the patients have benefited no one will deny, and one of the most pleasant facts about the employment of trained nurses is that the lives of the unfortunate but respectable poor who come into our sick wards have been thereby made happier and brighter. Mr Alex. M'Dougall, of the Manchester Board, one of the greatest authorities on Poor Law, told me that he had found that the terrible dread of the Workhouse among the respectable poor lay not in the food or the accommodation or the clothing provided, but in the association with vile characters, not under proper control, and whose language was horrible and indecent.

## BENEFIT TO THE MEDICAL OFFICERS.

The benefits the employment of competent nurses has conferred upon the medical officers of the Workhouses are innumerable. Every medical officer will agree with me that, unless you can have proper nursing for your cases, the doctor can do but little for his patients. As the late French Minister of War said: "The hands of the nurse are the physician's hands lengthened out to minister to the sick. Her watchful presence at the bedside is a trained vigilance, supplementary, and perfecting his watchful care; her knowledge of his patient, an essential element in the diagnosis of disease; her management of the patient, the practical side of medical science. If she fails to appreciate her duties, the physician fails in the same degree to bring aid to his patient."

In fact, unless you have satisfactory nursing for your sick, you are wasting the ratepayers' money to no purpose, and that brings me to a very important point of the question, because satisfactory nursing includes such a number of things that require consideration in detail—*e.g.*, as to the number of nurses that ought to be employed?

## NUMBER OF NURSES REQUIRED.

I have often been asked as to the right number of nurses to employ where there were so many beds, and I have always said the answer depended on the character of the cases. In places like Newcastle and Sunderland, with their large migratory population of the seafaring class, I should imagine they receive a very large number of serious acute cases, and require more nurses, both medical and surgical, than do some of the little Workhouses that appear to be almost situated at "the other end of nowhere," where they appear to have nothing but chronic cases, simply waiting for the time when *finis* shall be written against their names.

The Table appended is taken from a House of Commons return, issued in 1896, and shows the very different views held by Guardians as to the number of paid officials required.

I can only find, in the Northern District, four Unions with over two hundred beds, and three Unions with over a hundred. The other Unions have a smaller number of patients, the minimum being found at Bellingham, where, at the date of the return, they had not a single case in their sick wards—Rothbury being second, with one sick and bedridden and no aged and infirm.

For places of that class, the power given to the Guardians under the new Act, to employ and pay nurses when required, will be most useful, and possibly some of the Unions may be able to make arrangement with the Sick Nursing Institutions, which are now found in all the large towns, for the supply of trained nurses when required. It might be a question to consider, whether large Unions like Newcastle, South Shields, and Gateshead could not manage to assist the very small Unions when they require extra help.

The question whether these very small sick wards should continue to exist is another subject for dis-

cussion. The railway and the indiarubber-tired ambulance have revolutionised the means of transport for the sick, and personally I see no reason why we should not combine to provide accommodation for our sick poor in various districts, as we are doing all over the country for our infectious diseases. It is no doubt true that the patients are in some cases placed at a considerable distance from their friends, but it must not be forgotten that the rapid and cheap means of transit now provided enable the friends to travel double the distance at half the cost that was customary when the Unions were established.

### CLASS OF CASES.

The difference in the proportion of "Sick and Bedridden" to "Aged and Infirm" patients, even in adjacent Workhouses, according to the return, is sometimes very striking, as the following figures in my opinion prove:—\*

Union.		Sick and Bedridden.	Aged and Infirm.	Total.	Number of Patients to each Paid Nurse.
Gateshead	-	200	18	218	24
Newcastle	-	180	55	235	29
South Shields	-	180	70	250	20
Tynemouth	-	65	79	144	36

You will notice that at Gateshead the number of sick and bedridden is eleven times as great as that of the aged and infirm, while at Tynemouth the aged and infirm actually out-number the sick and bedridden.

Another point worthy of notice is, that at South Shields you have one nurse to twenty patients; at Newcastle, one to twenty-nine; and at Tynemouth, one to thirty-six. Now, if these Conferences do nothing else, they enable us to discuss questions such as these, and see if possible why some Unions should employ 50 per cent. more nurses than others.

That more nurses should be employed than have

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\* House of Commons Return, June 1896.



been in the past, appears to be the opinion all over the country. Certainly it is the opinion of the Guardians in the Northern Conference District. Since 1890, the number of paid officers in the sick wards has nearly doubled, the greatest increase being in Durham.

				Number of Paid Officers acting as Nurses.	
				1890.	1896.
Durham	-	-	-	27	58
Northumberland			-	14	20
Cumberland		-	-	8	11
Westmoreland		-	-	3	4
				—	—
				51	93

The improvement is really even greater than these figures would lead you to believe, for the number of trained nurses has risen in the same time from twenty-one to fifty-nine. Great as the improvement has been, there is still ample room for progress, for there are Workhouses with thirty-two, thirty-five, and even forty-four inmates of the sick wards under the care of one nurse, and it is quite impossible for one nurse to attend to such a large number; where you have over twenty cases the strong probabilities are that there is at least one serious case of illness that requires attention during the night. In Lancashire, where we have a total of 8,800 in our sick wards, the numbers for the whole county work out one nurse to every thirteen patients, and, in my opinion, that is about the right proportion, except in some of the great city Unions like West Derby, where they require more nurses. Urban Unions, with an average of two hundred inmates, ought certainly to have at least twelve nurses, and a superintendent nurse.

#### SALARIES OF NURSES.

We are, doubtless, unanimously of opinion that our nursing must be good. Good nursing means good nurses, and good nurses should be properly paid. Sometimes, especially in the case of some of the

inferior London Unions, miserably inadequate wages are offered. Only a few weeks ago, I saw an advertisement for nurses at £20 per annum, or less than you would pay a competent cook. This amount is utterly inadequate for a first-class nurse, and if the result is that Boards who pay such wretched salaries get incompetent nurses, they only receive what they deserve.

### DIETARY OF NURSES.

It is not only the salaries that in many cases require revision, the dietary table for all our officials also wants overhauling. The wearisome monotony of the dietary is in many cases enough to set any one against it. The cast-iron rules of the Local Government Board in regard to the food of the pauper, do not apply to the dietary of your officials, and the lady Guardians might do excellent service if they would seriously take in hand this question. In many cases the dietary is deficient in green vegetables, fruit, and meat other than beef and mutton. Why should not your officials—not your nurses only—have a variety like we have in our own homes? If Workhouse Masters will only study their officials' comfort, they will find that any additional trouble is far more than repaid by the increased contentment and harmony in the Institution. Probably, in a considerable number of the country Workhouses, more vegetables are supplied than shown on the diet tables, on account of the Workhouses having kitchen gardens; but in many of the city Unions this is unfortunately impossible, on account of the great value of the land, and in those Institutions, let us hope, there will be less cause for complaint in the future than there has been in the past.

### ACCOMMODATION.

Here, again, there is room for improvement. In many of the old Workhouses there was no provision made for this class of officials. Thirty years ago, I

remember, the Chorlton Union employed two trained nurses, where we now have upwards of sixty. Fourteen years ago, we built a Nurses' Home for forty nurses, and now we have to provide for our additional staff. So having learnt wisdom by experience, I should advise you to provide plenty of good accommodation for all your officials. In small Workhouses it is, no doubt, almost impossible to provide a separate Nurses' Home; but if you must have the nurses' apartments in the same building as your sick wards, do try and have them placed so that the nurse or nurses can sleep undisturbed by the noise, inseparable from bare floors. This is not an unimportant point. I have known good nurses obliged to leave the service of Boards simply because they were employed as night nurses, and were quite unable to sleep by day on account of the noise. You will notice that I want *all* the bedrooms so placed that they are free from noise, for this reason no nurse ought to be employed on night duty more than one month out of three, and therefore they all ought to take their turn at night duty. Long experience has convinced me that night work long continued is injurious to the health of the nurses.

Not only should their bedrooms be comfortable, but their day rooms also, and take care that they have easy-chairs to rest their backs. Lifting helpless cases is by no means easy work, and sprained backs are by no means uncommon among nurses. Leaving sprained backs out of the question, nursing is downright hard work, and your nurses have a right to be comfortable when they are off duty, for, even in these socialistic days, the eight hours' day does not yet apply to nurses.

In a good many cases it would, I am afraid, be more correct to say that they work sixteen, but whatever the hours are, there is one thing that we must do, viz., take care that our nurses get sufficient fresh air every day. Two hours a day outside the workhouse



gates is certainly not too much. In addition to this daily refresher they should have a half holiday every week, a whole holiday once a month, and three weeks' leave of absence in the year. In recommending good treatment for our nurses, I am speaking quite as much in the interests of the Guardians as I am of the nurses. There are few things more trouble to Guardians than having sick nurses, and unless you allow them sufficient leave, sooner or later you are bound to have them sick on your hands.

Some of you may think this quantity excessive. When you have carefully considered the matter, you will find it the reverse. Mr Baldwin Fleming, in that excellent paper of his\* on "Workhouse Nursing," gives such an excellent description of the work of a nurse, that no apology is required for quoting it. Mr Baldwin Fleming describes how on visiting day you go into the sick wards and you find all looking cheery and bright, and he continues, "That is what you see."

"But I would ask you to try and picture for yourselves what you do not see. Try to think what the care of one paralysed bed-ridden case means for the nurse. The constant changing, the repulsive offices that have to be performed, the unceasing watching to prevent bed sores, the difficulty in feeding, and even at times the irritation and ingratitude of the patient. And this brings me to the question of night nursing. Nothing can be more inconsistent than to make full arrangements for good day nursing, and to hesitate to do the same for night work. People who do not understand nursing appear to think that anybody is good enough to watch during the night. As a matter of fact, the good work of a day is often spoilt by the bad work of a night."

I heartily agree with Mr Baldwin Fleming. It is

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\* "Workhouse Nursing," Address by Baldwin Fleming, Poor Law Inspector to the Hampshire Guardians Association at Winchester. Darling & Son, London.

true that there is less to do at night than during the day, but I do most emphatically say that those nurses who are employed should be competent for the work. Only the other day I heard of an old woman having to look after sixty patients during the night, which is absurd, as old Euclid would say, and a disgrace to that Board of Guardians, who are certainly unworthy to be called Guardians of the poor. To return for one minute to the question of night nurses, you frequently see night nurses advertised for. I hope the day is not far distant when it will be illegal to employ nurses continuously on night duty. One month in three is, as I said just now, the maximum that should be permitted by any Board, for, as a rule, the health of nurses deteriorates on night duty, very few of them being able to sleep as well during the day as at night. The deterioration is probably not altogether due to want of refreshing sleep, it is also caused in some cases by want of a proper diet. Nurses on night duty require to be quite as well looked after as those on day duty. There is, I am afraid, too much tea and toast in their diet. The best plan is to give them a good dinner at seven when they go on duty, and a good breakfast when they come off, and then the midnight meal they may look after themselves.

#### MEDICAL APPLIANCES.

A good medical officer is of little use unless he is provided with competent nurses, and a good nurse must have proper appliances for the work if she is to do it satisfactorily. At present, I am afraid, we do not provide sufficient stock. We fail to realise that while our beds require two sheets a week, there are in our Workhouses cases that require fourteen and even twenty sheets a week. Depend upon it that there is no economy in having an inadequate stock of linen and clothing, the cost is only in the first outlay. There is another point where we often fail, and that is in not providing earthenware drinking vessels, at any rate for

the sick. Tin pannikins for tea are a mistake. The chemical action that goes on must spoil the taste of the tea, and when you consider how old people relish their tea, it is a hardship that they should have it spoilt unnecessarily, and it is unnecessary, for the difference in cost between earthenware and tin-ware is infinitesimal.\* This may appear a very small matter, but we must remember that matters that appear to healthy people mere trifles not worth thinking about, are really serious matters to people leading the monotonous lives that the sick, specially the chronic cases, must do in our Workhouse wards.

### DECORATION OF SICK WARDS.

If only for the sakes of the chronic sick we ought to try and make our wards bright. There is no excuse now for not having coloured pictures on the walls, you have only to ask your friends for the large pictures in the Christmas numbers of the illustrated papers. In every workhouse there is some old man who can make picture frames, and plain mouldings are so cheap now that even Dickens' "gentleman in the white waist-coat" would hardly grudge the cost—at any rate I never knew a Board who adopted the plan that ever regretted having done so.

I am quite aware that there are Boards represented here who have carried out almost everything suggested; if every Board has, it only shows how great has been the improvement during the last twenty years; if there are a minority who have not done so, it is high time they came into line with the Boards of light and leading in their own districts. Complex as the problems of poverty are with which we have to struggle, we are rapidly getting rid of the Guardians' *bete noir*

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\* On the Continent, even in Lunatic Asylums, glass drinking vessels are used, and I was informed that the amount of breakage is very small.



the really able-bodied pauper, in fact the very name Workhouse is rapidly becoming a misnomer, they are really refuges for the orphan, the aged, and the sick, and the sooner we realise that fact the better for everybody concerned. (Cheers.)

RETURN showing, in respect of each Workhouse and separate Workhouse Infirmary in the Northern Counties of England, the number of persons occupying the Sick Wards, and the number of Paid Officers acting as Nurses in the Year 1896.

Names of Unions and Parishes under Separate Boards of Guardians.	Workhouse, Workhouse Infirmary, &c.	Number of Persons occupying the Wards for the Sick on the 1st day of June 1896.		Number of Paid Officers acting as Nurses.	Number of Officers included in Column 3 who, prior to their appointment by the Guardians, had received any Training in Nursing.	Number of Officers included in Column 3 who had no Training prior to appointment, and who are now, as Probationers or otherwise, receiving Training in Nursing.	Period or Average Tenure of Office of Officers included in Column 4.	Number of Pauper Inmates who assist in the Personal Care of the Sick, &c., included in the Return.	
		Aged and Infirm only.						Convalescent Patients.	Other than Convalescent Patients.
		Sick and Bed-ridden.	2.						
DURHAM.									
Darlington -	-	15	32	2	1	1	2	...	...
Stockton -	-	41	31	3	3	...	4	...	18
Sedgefield -	-	...	8	(a)	...	...	...	...	2
Hartlepool -	-	...	50	1	...	1	...	...	...
	Separate Workhouse Infirmary -	101	70	7	4	3	<div><div>1-5</div><div>2-2</div><div>1-0</div></div> <div><div>6</div><div>0</div><div>8</div></div>	3	14
Auckland -	-	68	45	2	2	...	0	21	3
Teesdale -	-	23	10	1	1	...	0	...	4
Weardale -	Separate Workhouse Infirmary -	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	...
Lanchester -	-	34	8	2	1	1	0	...	...
Durham -	-	5	54	3	1	2	...	...	2
Easington -	-	22	41	3	1	...	0	...	3
Houghton-le-Spring -	-	11	12	1	...	...	...	...	...
Chester-le-Street -	-	19	16	1	1	...	<div><div>0</div><div>5</div></div> <div><div>1-3</div><div>2-1</div><div>1-0</div><div>1-0</div></div> <div><div>5</div><div>0</div><div>5</div><div>2</div></div>	2	5
Sunderland -	-	165	82	10	5	5	(b)	...	...
South Shields -	-	180	70	12	10	2	1	...	...
	Workhouse	200	18	9	8	1	1	1	...

Newcastle-on-Tyne	Workhouse	-	-	-	180	55	8	7	...	3	0	2	17
Tynemouth	Workhouse	-	-	-	65	79	4	1	(c) 3	4	0	4	6
Castle Ward	Workhouse	-	-	-	3	10	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Hexham	Workhouse	-	-	-	4	22	2	2	...	0	6	2	...
Haltwhistle	Workhouse	-	-	-	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Bellingham	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morpeth	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	5	15	(d) 1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Alnwick	Workhouse	-	-	-	21	11	1	...	...	...	...	...	3
Belford	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	4	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Berwick-on-Tweed	Workhouse	-	-	-	18	10	2	2	...	3	2	...	...
Glendale	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	2	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Rothbury	Workhouse	-	-	-	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
CUMBERLAND.													
Alston-with-Garrigill	-	-	-	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Penrith	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	10	...	1	1	...	3	8	...	...
Brampton	Workhouse	-	-	-	2	13	1	1	...	...	...	...	2
Longtown	Workhouse	-	-	-	4	7	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
Carlisle	Workhouse, Fusehill	-	-	-	3	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	51	30	(e) 5	2	(e) 3	{ 1-5 1-3 }	0	...	...
Wigton	Workhouse	-	-	-	4	21	1	1	...	0	7	2	...
Cockermouth	Workhouse	-	-	-	20	24	1	1	...	0	2	6	2
Whitehaven	Workhouse	-	-	-	22	8	1	1	...	2	0	...	7
Bootle	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
WESTMORLAND.													
East Ward	Workhouse	-	-	-	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
West Ward	Separate Workhouse Infirmary	-	-	-	5	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	1
Kendal	Workhouse, Kendal	-	-	-	2	7	1	1	...	1	0	1	...
	Workhouse, Milnthorpe	-	-	-	5	17	1	...	...	...	...	...	6

(a) Sedgfield.—Col. 3—The matron acts as nurse.

(b) Sunderland.—Col. 7—Twenty-eight of the inmates act as wardsmen and wardswomen, doing menial work only.

(c) Tynemouth.—Col. 5—These officers had had experience in nursing prior to their appointment.

(d) Morpeth.—Col. 3—There was one vacancy at the date of the Return.

(e) Carlisle.—Cols. 3 and 5—Excluding two probationers unpaid who came for one year's training.



## DISCUSSION.

Mrs CHARLES CROPPER said she must first thank Dr Rhodes for having travelled a long way to attend that Conference. He had started at half-past five on the previous morning for the purpose. Guardians now, as always, had to face the apparently insoluble problem of providing every requisite as in a general hospital with extreme economy. But the worst policy was to become discouraged at the problem, and do nothing at all. If a Board left off trying to do anything they got hopelessly behind the times. They must make a point of always doing something in improving their Workhouses and sick wards, which was the special subject of their consideration that day. If they did fall behind, there came a day when the Local Government Board said the whole place must be rebuilt, and then the mistaken economy of doing nothing became apparent, and the ratepayers indeed felt the pinch. It was, as a rule, a long while before Guardians discovered what very large amounts they had to administer, and it surprised them to find how lightly the rates did fall on the "poor ratepayers." Taking the man who had to pay rates on £30 a year, in her own Union he would pay about £1 a year in poor-rates; and an outlay of £250 would mean that he would have to pay an extra 1¼d. That would not be the last straw. The outcry about the poor ratepayers was often overdone. Suppose they remained stationary from year to year, never making any improvement, and were called upon to expend £100,000 on land and buildings, there would be something that the ratepayers would feel. Small, gradual, and incessant improvement should be their aim. Supposing they spent £200 on the various articles, rugs, table-covers, and so forth, Dr Rhodes referred to, it would never be felt by the ratepayers, and it would make the wards more cheerful. There was no reason why Guardians should not invite donations of such articles from the richer ratepayers, pointing out to them how lightly they were let off in comparison with the poorer ratepayers. The reason for making the wards cheerful was not altogether to please the poor inmates, but to make things bright for the nurses, and to enable them to get the patients well and out of the sick wards as soon as possible. There was now no one to do the work in the Workhouses. There used to be many able-bodied paupers. There were not many now, and so Guardians needed to increase the staff of the Workhouses, especially in the laundry department, if it were to supply the large amount of clean linen required for the infirmaries. They required the best appliances and machinery in the laundry. In the kitchen also more help was wanted. She had seen a woman of seventy years of age doing the cooking for eighty or one hundred people, and a young woman in a very delicate condition, and another woman with a terrible eczema on her hands, had also been engaged in the same work. They could not have a woman to do night-nursing only in the smaller Unions. The best plan seemed to her to be to have a woman able to assist the matron in general work when there was

no night nursing to be done. It was not feasible at present to have a trained nurse for night only in the smaller Unions. What she pleaded for was that Guardians should always be carrying out some improvement, so as to keep in line with the times.

Mrs CHALKER (Carlisle) stated that in the Carlisle Union the difficulty of diet for the nurses had been met by an alteration of the arrangements. When nurses were supplied with rations in the ordinary way, they did not take enough food to enable them to carry on their work. With the consent of the Local Government Board the superintendent nurse received a cash allowance in respect of the food for each nurse, and she manipulated it as she liked, and had been getting in food of great variety, just as Dr Rhodes recommended in his Paper. The arrangement had worked very well. As to the necessity for fresh air, it was a point that Guardians were very apt to overlook. Indeed, she had heard it objected that so many nurses were not required because one had been seen out of doors, and actually riding a bicycle. She wished all the Guardians could have heard Dr Rhodes' admirable paper. She would like to know what Dr Rhodes considered would be a proper proportion of nurses to patients for night duty. There was a great deal required doing at night amongst the absolutely infirm patients.

In reply to the Chairman, Mrs CHALKER stated that the nurses' food was not sent in by a caterer, but prepared by a servant specially appointed for that work.

Mr COULSON (South Shields) said that owing to difficulties about the cooking of nurses' rations there was a probability of a paid cook being appointed for that purpose at South Shields. He wished to ask Dr Rhodes what he would recommend in the way of training probationers. With regard to nurses' quarters, they had not got a separate home for them as yet, but they were going to give them a new mess-room. They had two night nurses who attended entirely to the night nursing. They had also a male nurse whose services were very valuable. As regarded leave of absence, their nurses enjoyed quite as much as Dr Rhodes recommended in the paper.

Mr MURRAY (Tynemouth) said their nurses had three months night and three months day duty alternately. With regard to the age of nurses, there was a great difference between Workhouse nursing and hospital nursing. The chronic cases in the Workhouse infirmaries did not interest nurses so much as acute cases, and he thought it was well to have nurses of a more mature age, say thirty to forty and upwards, to tend chronic cases. A great responsibility rested on the Visiting Committees, and they should watch things very carefully, and be especially vigilant if the death rate rose much above the average. They had as good a Master at Tynemouth as anywhere in the country, and his experience was to have nurses of from thirty-five to forty years of age; they had more patience with the old people.

Mr CRAIGHILL feared they were getting rather away from Workhouses with two hundred inmates.



Mr MAYNE (Newcastle) said he had always had the impression that Dr Rhodes was an idealist ; if that was so, he had come to the conclusion that Newcastle Infirmary was an ideal institution. There was nothing in the paper that they had not already got. It was very difficult to deal with the nurses. Guardians had almost to be humble before them ; but they had now an excellent staff, and every prospect of good work in the future. It was, however, very difficult to get nurses to take night work.

Mr JENNER FUST (Local Government Board) said he could not help thinking of the contrast between Dickens' "gentleman in the white waistcoat" and the gentleman in the white waistcoat who had read the paper. Dr Rhodes was never happier than when having a little fling at the Local Government Board, as in his allusion to the cast-iron rules regulating dietary. This did not apply to the sick wards, and yet there was, as far as his experience went, far more monotony in the dietary of the sick than of the healthy inmates. The dietary in the sick wards gave the same breakfast, dinner, and supper day after day and week after week so long as the patient was on the particular dietary. But the doctor had a free hand as to this. Dr Rhodes dealt with places containing two hundred invalids, whereas he (the speaker) thought the paper was to refer to places having not more than two hundred inmates all told. It was in respect to the latter institutions that the difficulties arose. It was very difficult to arrange for nursing where they had only ten inmates. Trained nurses disliked dull little places, and very soon got away from them. A valuable suggestion had been made to him that matrons should be trained as nurses, and have assistance, so that they might be free to do nursing when the emergency arose. In the smaller Unions they might go further than that, they might do without Masters, who had very little to do in Unions with only twenty-five or thirty inmates all told. He did not mean there should be no male officers ; there would be the porter. The Master was rather a superfluous official in small Workhouses. Women could keep accounts just as well as men if they had the opportunity. (Hear, hear, and laughter). Arrangements might be made for calling in extra nurses if emergencies arose, but the arrangements must be perfected in advance so that a telegram would fetch assistance. As to cooking for the nurses. If the cooking was good enough for the Master and Matron, it should be good enough for nurses. It was better to try to improve the cooking of the Workhouse as a whole than to try to set up separate kitchens. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Canon WALKER, as representing a comparatively small Workhouse, wished to ask H.M. Inspector whether it would be legal for his Board to arrange with the County Nursing Association to supply nurses when required.

Mr DAWSON (Local Government Board) said it was open to Guardians, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to



subscribe to Nursing Associations in order to obtain assistance from them in time of need.

Canon WALKER said it cost £45 or £50 to have a nurse stationed in the village by the Nursing Association. Might the Guardians subscribe £15 or £20 towards that expense?

Mr DAWSON said the circumstances must in every instance be stated to the Local Government Board for approval. He strongly recommended Guardians to read Mr Baldwin Fleming's valuable paper on nursing.

Mr YARR (Bootle) said that he represented a very small Union, where there was sometimes not a single sick person. Their nurse was very useful in assisting with the children. Even in the smallest Union it would pay them to have a trained nurse if they could get one willing to help with other duties.

Mr SPRAGUE (Bootle) said Guardians must consider not only the poor but the ratepayer, and if they could do without trained nurses, so much the better.

Mr NEWBY (Middlesborough) believed in making nurses as comfortable as possible, and giving them plenty of time for exercise.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Sunderland) said that trained nurses seemed to think a Workhouse infirmary was below a general hospital in dignity. If a rise in salaries would tempt them to Poor Law work, why, let them offer it at once.

Rev. Father BOURKE said that the paper read at Gilsland some years ago (quoted by Dr Rhodes) was the means of enabling some of the Wigton Guardians to get trained nurses for that Union. (Cheers.) The trained nurses at Wigton were working sixteen hours a day, and very rarely got any fresh air. He was pleased to say that Poor Law Conferences in general, and that at Gilsland in particular, had been instrumental in effecting great reforms in Poor Law administration. (Cheers.)

Rev. Canon CURWEN proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Rhodes for the paper, and to Mrs Charles Cropper, the selected speaker. A great deal of light came from Chorlton. (Cheers.) The question of the treatment of imbeciles was largely the outcome of the action of the Chorlton Board. Dr Rhodes deserved their warmest thanks for his enlightened activity in Poor Law work. (Cheers.)

Mr ARMSTRONG (Sunderland) seconded, and mentioned that at Sunderland the superintendent nurse received £50 a year. They had a resident medical officer who lectured to and trained the probationers, and as showing the efficiency of the system he might mention that the Superintendent at South Shields was trained at Sunderland. They had not a nurses' home at the present time, but as they were building a new hospital, probably one would be provided. (Hear, hear.) His Board did all they could to conduce to the comfort of the nurses. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN said he felt deeply grateful to Dr Rhodes, who had come a great distance to read the paper. Dr Rhodes's time was

very valuable, and his experience immense, and he had been abroad to study the working of similar institutions. He was gratified to find that the Conference had been the means of bringing about reforms in the Unions of the district.

Mr THOMPSON and Mrs DODDS endorsed the vote of thanks to Mrs Cropper.

The votes of thanks having been carried with acclamation.

Dr RHODES, who was cheered on rising to reply, said he was glad that Mrs Charles Cropper had raised the point about rates. Guardians would find that ratepayers would grumble about the expense, but would return them if there was a steady striving after improvement, but if there was unreasoning retrenchment, they would kick them out. (Hear, hear.) In his own Union they had spent £70,000 on the schools, land, and buildings, and it would make a difference of about 1d. in the £. He hoped that they had all got spring mattresses in the infirmaries now: they were no dearer than the others, and infinitely more comfortable. He hoped that in buying baths they would be earthenware, not iron ones. His Board regarded expenditure on hearthrugs and table covers and the like as justifiable expenditure. In consequence of the lack of able-bodied paupers, for which he was very thankful, there were not enough hands to do the work, and it had been found desirable to instal some mechanical appliances for the laundry, by which the work was well done, and the clothes lasted longer than with manual labour. In his Union five of the porters had married nurses, and they were now Masters and Matrons of small Unions. (Cheers and laughter.) He hoped that every Union now would employ a paid cook. He did not quite agree with the order of the Local Government Board as to nursing. If he had been making the order he would have made it depend upon the character of the Workhouse rather than on a mere rule of thumb. There was an idea that chronic cases did not require such skilled attendance as other cases. No class of cases called for more careful treatment on the part of the nurses. He did not for a moment agree that the death rate was any indication of the character of the treatment in an infirmary, for it depended upon whether it received many acute cases. If there were over twenty cases they required a night nurse. The statistics in the paper were the latest available. In his opinion, nurses trained in the Workhouses were better for their purpose than those trained in the general hospitals. Nurses from Chorlton had been appointed at Queen Charlotte's Hospital and other institutions, and the status of the Workhouse nurse was now rapidly rising. He agreed that the kitchen ought to do for the sick wards as well as the Workhouse generally, but in large institutions he thought that there should be a small cooking apparatus in each pavilion for the nurses to make beef-tea and other things of that kind. In the very small Unions, if they had a labour-master, they could quite well do without a Master at all. As to district nurses, he recommended that if they cared to

do so, they should use bicycles. It was astonishing the ground they could cover in that way. He hoped that there was not such a thing in the North of England as a Union which had not an adequate supply of hot water. As to nurses, they would have to be paid £30 a year to start with, and would have to be made more comfortable than in the general hospitals, for the latter were generally situate in the centre of the town, whereas the infirmaries were in the outskirts or the lowest part of a town. He was glad to think that the question of proper provision for the epileptic and imbecile was now engaging attention.

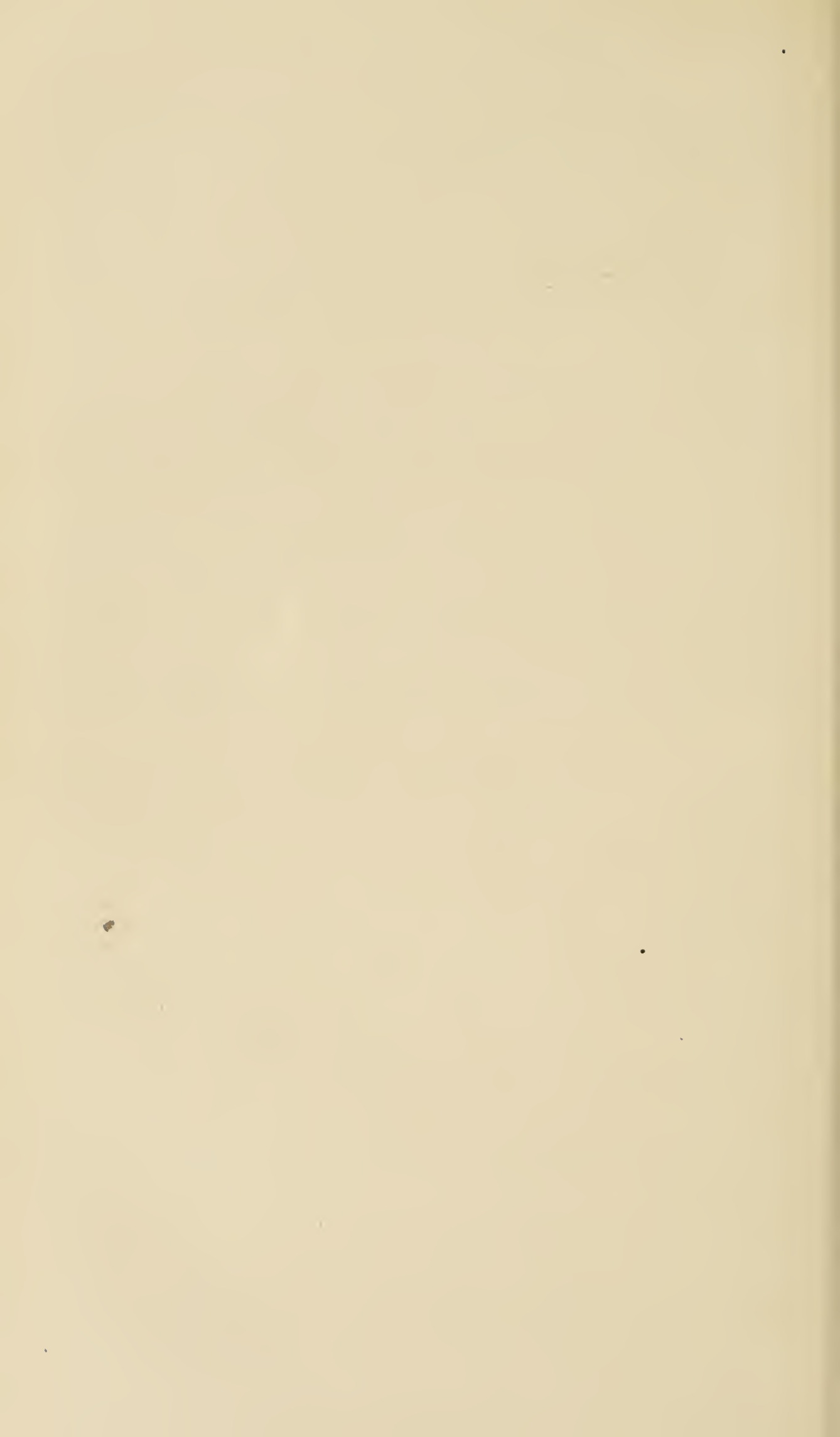
In reply to Mr Bosanquet,

Dr RHODES added that the address of the Northern Workhouse Nursing Association was, Barton Arcade, Manchester, and that it was flourishing greatly ; indeed, it could not cope with all the demands upon it. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN said it was a truly Christian endeavour to brighten the lives of those who had to spend their days in infirmaries, and if they could make the nurses comfortable, they would find it the most economical course in the long run. (Hear, hear.) Their time had been well spent if they had made one nurse's life brighter, one patient more happy. (Cheers.)

The proceedings terminated with hearty votes of thanks to the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer, who both briefly thanked the members.





## South-Western District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SOUTH-WESTERN POOR LAW CONFERENCE, HELD AT  
THE GUILDHALL, PLYMOUTH, ON WEDNESDAY  
AND THURSDAY, 20TH AND 21ST JULY.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE, M.P., *Chairman of the*  
*Wilts County Council*, PRESIDING.

The following Unions were represented at the Conference.

### CORNWALL (13 Unions).

#### BODMIN—

Symonds, Hy.  
Barron, T.  
Martyn, W.  
Santo, J.  
Pollard, E.  
Guy, Miss.

#### CAMELFORD—

Hayne, W. H.  
Harris, N.

#### FALMOUTH—

Webber, Thomas.  
Odgers, Thomas.

#### LAUNCESTON—

Oag, Jas.  
Rawling, John.

#### LISKEARD—

Glencross, Rev. E. H.  
Boucher, A. R.  
Tucker, J. S.

#### REDRUTH—

Beauchamp, L. R.

#### ST AUSTELL—

Magor, John.  
Pearce, W. E.  
Coade, Miss Jane.  
Veale, Mrs.  
Nicholls, W. J.  
Davies, C. E.  
Purcell, Rev. H. N.

### CORNWALL—*continued.*

#### ST GERMANS—

Paige, R. E.  
Parson, N.  
Kirwan, Rev. J. H.

#### ST COLUMB MAJOR—

Martyn, J. K.  
Martyn, Major.  
Broad-Eade, Rev. J.

#### STRATTON—

Black, Rev. J. W.  
Pickard, Thos.

#### TRURO—

Hendy, J.  
Dorrington, T. L.  
Eastlake, Mrs.

### DEVON (12 Unions).

#### EAST STONEHOUSE—

Northcott, J.  
Barnes, W.  
Tuttle, R. S.  
Wills, J. C.

#### EXETER—

Geare, Miss.  
Jarman, W.  
Chorley, Mrs.  
Clapp, C. R. M.

#### NEWTON ABBOT—

Smith, Mrs Roylands.  
Manlove, Miss E.

DEVON—*continued.*NEWTON ABBOT—*continued*—

Heath, W. H.  
Tucker, Major R. C.  
Ley, Dr J. W.

## PLYMOUTH—

Bazley, R. J.  
Brown, J.  
Wilcocks, H. S.  
Spear, W. S.  
Adams, W.  
Lucas, W. W.  
Chubb, W.  
Murray, Thos.  
Kennedy, Rev. D., D.D.  
Martin, Jas.  
Floyd, H.  
Clarke, G.  
Argall, J. S.

## PLYMPTON ST MARY—

Cocks, John.  
Glanville, Miss.  
Bewes, Mrs Cecil.

## ST THOMAS—

Hamilton, A. H. A.  
Phear, Miss.

## STOKE DAMEREL—

Bax, Mrs.  
Moon, W. J.  
Harmer, Rev. A. A.

## TAVISTOCK—

Spear, J. W.  
Willcock, J. W.  
Hammick, S.

## TORRINGTON—

Moore-Stevens, R. A.

## DORSET (12 Unions).

## CERNE—

Palaiet, H. H.

## SOMERSET (17 Unions).

## BEDMINSTER—

Fry, Miss J. M.  
Harding, S.

## FROME—

Paige, Rev. J. S.  
Thomson, Rev. W.

## KEYNSHAW—

Gibbs, W. G.  
Nurse, R. F.

## WELLINGTON—

Price, W. Sydney,  
*Sec. Somerset Poor Law Conferences.*

## WINCANTON—

Board, W.  
Wyke, W.  
Bruton, W.  
Moore, F. S.

## WILTS (17 Unions).

## CHIPPENHAM—

Fuller, Mrs  
Rooke, Miss F.

## CRICKLADE AND WOOTTON BASSETT—

Gardner, E. T.  
Ockwell, Chas.

## DEVIZES—

Butler, D. W.

## MELKSHAM—

Bickle, Miss.

## MERE—

Baker, T. H.  
Harding, J. A.

## TISBURY—

Jeffery, J. E.  
Keevil, W. C.

## WARMINSTER—

Pelly, Dowager Lady.

## VISITORS.

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, M.P., *Chairman.*

Mason, Miss, Local Government Board Inspector.

Chapman, Miss Florence M., „ „ „

Murray-Browne, T. L., „ „ „

Thomas, H. Preston, „ „ „

Chance, W., Hon. Sec., Central Poor Law Conferences.

Ellis, J. H., Town Clerk of Plymouth.

CLAPP, CECIL R. M., M.A., L.L.M., *Hon. Secretary*, 2 Bedford Circus, Exeter.

BRIAN, C. G., *Local Honorary Secretary.*

Only one of the twelve Unions in Dorset was represented, while in the other four Counties the following Unions were unrepresented at the Conference, viz. :—

CORNWALL.—Helston and Penzance.

DEVON.—Axminster, Honiton, Totnes, Kingsbridge, Okehampton, Crediton, Tiverton, South Molton, Barnstaple, Bideford, and Holsworthy.

SOMERSET.—Williton, Dulverton, Taunton, Bridgewater, Langport, Chard, Yeovil, Shepton Mallet, Axbridge, Clutton, and Bath.

WILTS.—Highworth and Swindon, Malmesbury, Calne, Marlborough, Bradford, Westbury, Pewsey, Amesbury, Salisbury, and Wilton.



## SUBJECTS DISCUSSED—

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WEDNESDAY, 20TH JULY.

THE proceedings were opened by the MAYOR OF PLYMOUTH (Mr J. T. Bond), who said that he offered a hearty welcome to the delegates, and hoped that their deliberations might be educational and helpful. That Conference was important ; it embraced the Poor Law Unions which operated in the five western counties. Each Union covered a wide area ; and in each centre Guardians were confronted with problems of great importance and extreme complexity. He had never engaged in Poor Law work himself. He was reminded that they always had the poor with them. There were many persons poor through no fault of their own ; there was another class poor through their own fault. One of the greatest problems confronting Guardians was to discriminate wisely ; to judge between those of the deserving poor and those who were not deserving, still poor. Deserving poor merited real sympathetic relief. How to reach and relieve the deserving poor was a problem they were called upon to solve. In this country 10½ millions sterling was expended annually in connection with Poor Law relief. Included in this amount was the cost of pauper lunatics. He found that whilst thirty years ago the average per head of population was a little over 1s. 7d. in connection with Poor Law relief, in 1896 the amount per head of population had been reduced to 1s. 1d. This was the respective rates in the £ for Poor Law purposes simply, and not the cost of the maintenance of the individual pauper. Although there had been a great increase in population there had been a substantial diminution per head in the cost. When he compared the various divisions in the country, he found that in Devon the cost of out-door relief in that division was 80 per cent. of the whole ; the northern division of England was 62 per cent. ; the north-western division 43 per cent. ; and in London 20 per cent. These were figures which suggested plenty of food for thought. He knew there were many difficulties connected with the Poor Law question ; some of them would not, perhaps, be solved in their lifetime. There were certain features in connection with it

which called for urgent consideration. He regretted the absence of the Mayor of Devonport, who was prevented from being present by a previous engagement; Mr S. Vosper, Chairman of Stonehouse District Council, who had recently met with a carriage accident; Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, M.P., who was travelling from London, and would later on preside at the deliberations of the Conference; and Mr R. J. Bazley, Chairman of Plymouth Guardians.

Mr A. H. A. HAMILTON proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor for the welcome he had extended to the delegates. They were gathered in a famous and ancient town, one of the most important in the west of England. Plymouth was not only famous and ancient, but it was expanding in a very great degree.

The resolution was unanimously agreed to.

The papers on "Vagrancy" were then read; that by Mr Fox being read, in his absence, by Mr Price; Mr Keevil following with his paper.

## THE RATIONAL TREATMENT OF CASUAL PAUPERS.

BY MR CHAS. H. FOX, J.P.,

*Guardian of the Poor, Wellington.*

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I VENTURE to ask your consideration of a proposal, the object of which is to repress general vagrancy without inflicting unnecessary hardship on those who are *bonâ fide* seeking employment, and by rendering general, by an Order of the Local Government Board, the excellent arrangement, made by private subscription in Wilts, Dorset, and possibly other counties, for providing a mid-day ration on leaving the "house."

This proposal has met with a great deal of support, and has excited no small interest wherever it has been discussed.

Of course we are all aware that since the time of Queen Elizabeth constant efforts have been made by punitive or repressive legislation to "put down tramping," but with small effect, for indiscriminate charity and the reluctance of the police to enforce the law (for a reason I will presently explain), make the profession not only a possible, but in some ways an attractive, one.

The Act of 1882, ordering two nights' detention for those who seek the shelter and accept the labour task of the Casual Ward, is our last attempt in this direction, and is, I believe, not only inoperative but mischievous, *for it punishes the wrong man*. First of all we may lay down as a cardinal fact that the real professional tramp seldom or never seeks this stern legal shelter, so that this class, against whom all the machinery of "compulsory detention and compulsory work" is directed, is not touched by it. These fellows know both how to beg and how to evade the police, and either sleep in outhouses in summer, or in the cheap lodging-houses, where, with coppers in their pocket and plenty of victuals in their haversacks, they fare very comfortably. I have had careful statistics to prove this in the Union where I live (which is on the great high road to the West).

August to October 1896—

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Those sleeping in Lodging-houses .....	1,152

besides a large number who nightly lodge in the warmth of some neighbouring brickworks. This proportion is about 2 to 1 of those who do not seek the legal shelter, while of the minority who apply for shelter in our Workhouse wards, a considerable number are jobbing workmen drifting about in search of work. If a dock is to be made at Plymouth, or a branch railway started, we get quite a rush of these poor fellows, and it is *these men* whom we are punishing by two nights' detention, while the real tramp *gets off*, and laughs in his sleeve as he leaves his comfortable lodging-house.

What I and those who support this proposal maintain to be the *true principle*, is this: To give to all who apply for legal shelter, supper, bed, breakfast, and a good dole of bread and cheese on leaving the "House," *in exchange for an equivalent value of task-*



*work*, but let there be no attempt to imprison as there is under the present Act.

As to the cost of this system, we propose to exact the maximum task allowed, which is to break 4 cwt. of road stones. This, at the current labour price, amply pays the Guardians for the cost of food on the dietary given below.

This system is in fact the greatly desired and desirable *labour test* carried into practical operation. It would obviate the present excuse for begging, which is, that as all casual paupers are now turned out of our wards with no provision for their day's march, *they are compelled to beg* for food for the day or starve!

This is why the public are so weakly generous, and why the police are so negligent in enforcing the law against begging.

If the above "rational" regulations were adopted, the police would have no hesitation in arresting every man they see begging, for he would no longer have this valid excuse. He could then march through the country in search of work, or even in idleness, but he would have to pay for his lodging by his labour.

This "rational treatment of casuals" has been forestalled in some counties (notably Wiltshire and Dorsetshire), by the wise and philanthropic action of private individuals, who have, with the co-operation of the Joint-Committee of the County Council and the Chief Constable, instituted the system of "way tickets for all those who can show that they are seeking work; but these are local exceptions, and the system should not be subject to the variable aspects of private philanthropy, but should be sanctioned *by law* in this or some other form.

This system, which I have called "The Rational System," has this peculiar advantage, that while it treats all cases alike, *it neither pampers nor punishes*. It does not pamper the professional, or punish a man in search of work. Its operation is based on the

principle of an efficient labour test, and as it does away with the present acknowledged necessity of begging by providing sufficient food for the day's march to the next Police Station, the curse of begging may be firmly put down by the police and the Bench.

Hoping I have justified the use of the term, "The Rational Treatment of Casual Paupers."

#### DIETARY.

Supper—1 pint broth or skilly, and 8 oz. bread.

Breakfast—1 pint tea or skilly, and 8 oz. bread.

On leaving the "House"—8 oz. bread and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. cheese.

### EXISTING CAUSES OF PROMOTING VAGRANCY AND INCREASED POWERS FOR PREVENTION.

BY MR W. CHAS. KEEVIL,

*Guardian of the Tisbury Union, Wilts.*

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HAVING been asked to read a paper on this important question, I shall first touch on vagrants with children, and ask, Is it a good and proper example to honest, well-intentioned, and law-abiding parents, who are compelled to send their children to school, or to those parents who are of a somewhat dissolute turn of mind, to see these vagrants, with their children, tramping the roads at the public expense, their children receiving no education, but being brought up to the tricks and vices of their parents, and others of the same class they daily come in contact with, and eventually become hardened and initiated into the ways of idleness and worthlessness, which, in my opinion, is a good way of promoting vagrancy? From the reports I have obtained from most of the Unions in Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, the decrease of women and children is not so good in proportion as that of the male vagrants.

Sympathy for these people must be put on one side, and, owing to their unfortunate position, powerful constraint and moral suasion should be used to endeavour to bring them to a higher level in society, and to lead a life of amenity. They ought not to be allowed to tramp the country, but should be detained in their respective Unions for their children's education, who I believe, after experiencing the comforts and happiness of living a decent life, and with the results of a proper education, would volunteer for situations to be found them by the Guardians. Many will say these suggestions are cruel, drastic, and expensive, but they are nothing in comparison to the cruelty of tramping these children about the country in all weathers, and in the worst of places and society. Nor is the case a harder one than that of many a family who have made an application to their Guardians for some out-door relief, and have been refused it, owing to the death of a parent, or some other misfortune. An order for the House is offered, which they accept, and after being there for a time, their children receiving a good education, and now growing up, and in a position to earn their own living, they leave the Union, and start a home of their own again. I can prove to you several such cases in my district, which I am glad to say have been, and still are, doing well. Why do not these people do the same? "Discontent is not a vice of these people, but content," as long as they can live on in this precarious way. Neither must we forget what a great expense they are at the present moment to the country. They are supposed to be lawfully married, but I doubt if all are, and a prolonged detention would soon prove it. Women, with illegitimate children, especially ought to be detained.

We hear a great deal about the professional vagrant and the *bonâ fide* working man, which is, in most instances, a matter of name only. The latter will occasionally undertake employment, and as soon as he



has earned some money will go and have a drinking bout, and on recovery from its effects, if not already in the police cells, goes back to his work, only to find he will not be employed again. Such actions on the part of these men debar employers engaging them more than they possibly can. For instance, one of these so-called *bonâ fide* workmen applied to the police for his night's lodging. He was in such a drunken and dirty state that they locked him up. Next morning he was brought before the Magistrates. They fined him 6s., and allowed him a month for payment, and in default he was to go to prison for seven days. The time expired. Neither the man nor the money was forthcoming. After a lot of trouble on the part of the police, he was found and sent to prison, costing the country £3 in police expenses. Doubtless he again returned to the roads as "an honest workman." One of the Union reports to which I have referred, stated that the number of vagrants had considerably increased this last year. I wrote and asked the reason for the increase, and found that it was attributed to the construction of a new railway in the adjoining county, and many worked their way to it, "but did not stay there long at a time from one month and upwards." Doubtless, if they were satisfactory workmen, they could still obtain employment, for the work is still in hand, but the fact is that they are not the unemployed, but the unemployable.

Another matter that encourages vagrancy is indiscriminate charity. I can prove where these people have been seen to receive money by the police, who were powerless under the circumstances of the cases to take any action, and could only watch them. At night, on their application for admission to the Union, they were searched, but nothing in the shape of money was found on them. Unfortunately, they were under the influence of drink—females as well as males. I ask, what encouragement is it to those subscribers for the

suppression of vagrancy, such as have been established for some years in the counties of Wilts and Gloucester, which gives these vagrants opportunities of procuring a mid-day meal when on the road by applying at the houses or homes of the police? The county of Dorset has something similar, but not so good a system, I think, as the first named. Good results have been obtained during the last two years towards the decrease of vagrancy in these counties, while begging and sleeping-out cases have decreased as well, owing to the vigilance of the police, who are to be congratulated for the attention they give to these people.

Deputations have at different times waited on the Local Government Board on this question, and have been told the existing regulations already in force have not been carried out by Boards of Guardians, which is quite true, nor will they until they are made compulsory. From reports I find the Detention Scheme is not adopted by all Unions in these three counties, which is very detrimental and unfair to those Unions which have adopted it. Take, for instance, two Unions (Beaminster and Wimborne) in one of these counties which have not adopted detention. Their numbers in the last two years have increased 201 and 90 respectively. Now, take two other Unions in the same county who have adopted it. These Unions (Blandford and Sherborne) have decreased their numbers 769 and 852 respectively. Shaftesbury Union, in the same county, has no female ward, nor has it adopted detention. Their decrease during the last two years is 307. Take Warminster Union, in another county. It reports: "Adopted Detention Scheme some years since, but discontinued it January 1896; have had a decrease ever since." Doubtless many will be surprised at these last two reports, but when I tell you that every adjoining Union to these two Unions, with the exception of one, has adopted the Detention Scheme, does this not show what good

results the Detention Scheme has done, not only for these two Unions, but for the country generally?

I have also found from inquiries that although vagrants have in most cases to apply first to the police for admission to the Casual Ward, whether they have applied before or not within a month, the police have no instructions to notify that it is the second application (when such occurs) to the Master or porter of the Union. If the police had that authority, it would render double assistance in detecting such cases. Vagrants applying oftener than once a month have to be detained four nights.

On the whole, my experience has been that *bonâ fide* wayfarers are very few in number, and I think that the professional vagrant would soon abandon the life were it not for indiscriminate charity, and the knowledge that the Act and Order of 1882 will not be strictly enforced.

STATISTICS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF VAGRANTS RELIEVED IN THE COUNTIES OF SOMERSET, DORSET, AND WILTS DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.

SOMERSET.			DORSET.			WILTS.		
1895	-	25,062	1896	-	16,249	1896	-	29,271
1896	-	19,789	1897	-	12,613	1897	-	28,246
<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>		
Decrease 5,273			Decrease 3,636			Decrease 1,025		

Wilts shows the smallest decrease, which is attributed to new railways being in construction in three different parts of the county, to which large numbers are drawn, also new military camp on the Wiltshire Downs; and I find that the Detention Scheme has not been largely adopted in the adjoining county of Berks.

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DISCUSSION.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE, M.P. (Chairman of Wilts County Council) then took the chair, and thanked the Conference for having again placed him in that position. He would have been present at the outset of the proceedings only that he had been detained in his place in Parliament in consequence of the debate on Vaccination.



Mr MURRAY BROWNE (Local Government Board Inspector) said they had had two excellent papers. Statistics showed that vagrancy decreased in prosperous times, and increased in times of bad trade. There were a great many men on the road in bad times who could get some sort of work when trade was flourishing. The real gist of the vagrancy question was not the relief granted in the Workhouses, but the amount that tramps could get outside by begging. That was an opinion he had arrived at after a life-long experience. It was, he understood, a commonplace among casuals that it was a bad street where they could not get a penny, and as a man could "do" at least sixty streets a day, it required some high inducement to cause him to devote himself to honest labour; but beggars were not always in luck. He was glad that Mr Keevil's paper referred to the question of the children of vagrants, as he desired to state that several of the London Magistrates had held that the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was applicable to the children of tramps, and that the Reformatory and Refuge Union had in that way been able to get hold of many children. He hoped that the country Unions would take up the matter, and try to put the Act in force. Efforts had been made by the Church Army and other bodies to reclaim vagrants, but though they had taken the tramps off the road for a while, the result had not been generally satisfactory. Before he was connected with the Local Government Board, he worked for some time as Honorary Secretary of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, and he found that the proportion of failures in dealing with the vagrants who had been imprisoned for tearing up their clothes was much higher than among the young thieves. He did not mean to say that nothing should be done for these poor wretches, but it showed that the vice of idleness was peculiarly difficult to eradicate.

Mr WILLIAM JARMAN (Exeter) said that the question of vagrancy was a very large and important one. It seemed to him that one reason why Boards of Guardians failed to check vagrancy was their being tied down by the orders of the Local Government Board. If Guardians could impose a heavier task on the large number of vagrants who visited the Workhouse they would reduce a considerable portion of them. (Hear, hear.) The Local Government Board laid it down that a tramp should not break more than 4 cwt. of stone before leaving the House. He (Mr Jarman) was sorry such an order existed. At Exeter they had found that able-bodied inmates could break 5 cwt. of stone per hour, and they allowed a tramp from three to four hours to break a less quantity. The tramp looked upon the Workhouse as a kind of hotel, the work being of such a light character. They did not get the habitual tramp in the Workhouse. The old hands were too knowing, and could get enough to go to lodging-houses. The tramps who went from Union to Union were mostly the beginners at the business. These should be drastically treated so as to keep them out of the casual wards, and show them that honest work was easier in the long run. If they could tackle the

tramp when he came to the Workhouse first, and give him a larger quantity of stone to break, they would soon see him, to use a common phrase, "jack it up." Exeter Workhouse used to contain a number of lazy militiamen, who made the institution their home between the dates of training. These men were given two tons of stone a day to crack, with the result that they had all cleared out except one, and the last one had given the master notice that he was going to quit. (Laughter.) He had never seen a *bonâ fide* tramp. When a *bonâ fide* working man got out of employment, he speedily endeavoured to obtain work again. With more labour in the Workhouse the Guardians would soon get rid of a number of lazy vagabonds who now infested the place. Persons who termed themselves vagrants ought to be dealt with in the most stringent manner. They would never work, and if they could not live by what might be called fair means they would by foul.

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Sec. of the Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences) said they had had two short but interesting papers. There was a good deal of the vagrant spirit about Englishmen. If this was not, he doubted whether they would have won their huge empire. It was the fashion to find fault with the Local Government Board for not doing enough, but the remedy lay largely with each Board of Guardians. A national deputation on the subject recently waited upon the President of the Local Government Board. There should be a Departmental Committee, and an inquiry into vagrancy. The great thing they needed was uniformity of administration, and this could not be attained if Guardians were allowed to have their own way in regard to tasks, detention, and dietary. There was also the question whether a vagrant should be a county or a local charge, for they were seldom attached to a particular locality, and whether they should be put under the control of the police. An inquiry would probably show that the number of vagrants is greatly exaggerated. Under the present system a tramp very often got counted twice over. Then there was the question whether criminal vagrancy had decreased. If that was so the vagrancy laws had been on the whole successful. There was also the question of how far vagrancy had been influenced by the trades unions and by the labour troubles of recent years. The unfortunate schemes for "refuges" and "shelters" might also be considered, for they had attracted people to London who eventually drifted into the Workhouse and became paupers for the rest of their lives. Mr Fox objected to the detention of tramps, and yet maintained that they must perform a certain amount of work. They could not get rid of detention. As to the mid-day bread and cheese, it would be either thrown away or taken to the public-house. He preferred the way-ticket system, as in Gloucestershire. Indiscriminate "charity" was one of the principal causes of vagrancy.

Mr A. H. A. HAMILTON (St Thomas) said that they could not get hold of the great mass of vagrants. The number of tramps, however, was grossly exaggerated, owing, as Mr Chance said, to their



being counted twice over. Vagrancy was not so much a question for the Guardians as for the police. The cellular system was very effective, but the powers of detention were very sparingly exercised. If the Guardians had strictly observed the Orders of the Local Government Board, the position of affairs would have been much better at the present time. It was important to find out how far the short service system in the army had affected the statistics of vagrancy. Many of the vagrants on admittance informed the master that they were seeking genuine employment. At Exeter several had said they were on the way to Devonport to get work at the docks. These men were soon back again, their hands showing that they had not done any work. It was surprising to find such a large number of soldiers in Workhouses compared with naval men. It was very rare indeed that a naval man went to the Workhouse. Was one of the reasons that the sailors between the ages of fourteen and eighteen received good training, while many, who eventually became soldiers, got no training or discipline of any sort at the same age?

Mr GARDNER (Cricklade and Wootton Bassett) asked whether a resolution might be moved on the subject. With all deference to the gentlemen who had spoken, he must say that, in his opinion, the crux of the question in the two papers had not been touched, namely, whether there should be one or two nights' detention of casuals. He would like to move that the Conference considered that two nights' detention was likely to have a deterrent effect on vagrancy. He hoped that two nights' detention would be made compulsory.

The CHAIRMAN said there was nothing in the rules of the Conference contrary to the acceptance of resolutions, but he hoped that the discussion would deal with the papers generally and not be restricted to the resolution which had just been moved.

Mr HEATH (Newton Abbot) said that it would be a good thing to do away with the orders for lodging-houses, and only grant orders for the house. It was a hard task for a respectable working man to break two tons of stone, and that class of man should not be put on the same diet as the ordinary casual. He remembered that on one occasion a tailor stayed in the Union, and he positively could not do the stone breaking, and they had to release him without it. A good deal depended on the hardness of the stones.

Mr F. S. MOORE (Wincanton) said that in that Union tramps had to break four hundredweight of stones and stay two nights, and it had greatly decreased the number of tramps in the Union. In the first year of the present system they fell from 2881 to 1689; and last year there was a fall of 1700. The two nights' detention was a deterrent.

Mr PRESTON THOMAS (Local Government Board Inspector) said that the two papers presented a marked contrast. One should have been headed a scheme for the encouragement of tramps in this part of the country, for the writer proposed that they should do little or no work, and have extra food, and altogether took the sentimental



view of the question. The other was an eminently practical paper, and took the view that those who would not work, but preferred to prey on the public, should be compelled to do something in return. The system of giving vagrants a hard day's work, and detaining them two nights, had been successful wherever it was tried, without all these fringes of "way-ticket" and things of that kind. Unfortunately, it was one of those compulsory things that was optional—(laughter)—and it had been left very much to the discretion of individual Boards of Guardians to carry out the Order or not just as they liked; and a great many Boards had not carried out the Order, because they were influenced by what was done in adjoining Unions. As to the way-ticket system, he very much doubted as to the wisdom of encouraging tramps at all. At any rate, he would not impose fresh burdens on the rates for the sake of giving tramps mid-day meals. Why should a man who undertakes to travel a particular route be exempt from work and detention? The better plan was for the Workhouse master to exercise his discretion in the case of respectable men; at least ninety per cent of the men on the road were professional beggars and nothing else. In the labour colonies in Germany it had been found that seventy per cent. were not only lazy but criminal as well, and they were sent to forced labour for six months at a time. But the English Legislature would never do that. Then there was "General" Booth, who had tried labour colonies—an amateur attempt—and the want of powers of detention had resulted in this, that he had had to hire Essex farm labourers to do the work, showing that the tramp could not be trained as an agricultural labourer. Universal detention was the best solution of the problem of vagrancy.

Mr BAKER (Mere, Wilts) said that their rules provided for two nights' detention, but if the master was satisfied that a man was respectable, and *bonâ fide* in search of work, he might release him earlier. The numbers of admission increased so rapidly two or three years ago that they introduced the two nights' detention, with eight hundredweight of stone to crack. There were 1868 vagrants in 1894; 1612 in 1895; in 1896 they introduced two nights' detention and the eight hundredweight task, and in 1897 the admissions had fallen to 643.

Mr W. BOARD (Wincanton) said that the two nights' detention and an adequate task of stonebreaking would diminish the number of young tramps, but the men of sixty years and upwards were hopeless. As to the food, the Local Government Board a few months ago issued an Order that the children of tramps were to have milk and sugar, so that they were better off than the regular inmates.

Mr MOORE STEVENS (Torrington) said that in his experience of over twenty years he had come to the conclusion that in dealing with tramps they must harden their hearts. Tramps only laughed at those who treated them leniently. In the counties where the tramps were well treated the largest number would be found. The number of tramps in his Union had greatly decreased, and he had found a very

good recipe was to give them as much of the hardest stone to crack as possible, with the diet to which they were entitled, and insist on their having a bath. Tramps hated washing and hard work. He might appear hard-hearted, but he had learned what to do by conversation with the tramps themselves. The question would not be so difficult if there was uniformity of treatment. He had the privilege of serving Her Majesty in the militia, and he had found that his men knew the methods pursued in various Workhouses, and did all in their power to avoid the strict Workhouses. It was, however, a serious blot on the country, that if men undertook to serve the country in the militia their employment should not be kept open until their return to civil life. He hoped that one result of the Conference would be uniformity of action in the West of England.

Mrs FULLER (Chippenham) said that one means of checking vagrancy was by exercising more power over the children of tramps. She knew of cases where persons regularly left the Workhouse at certain periods to avoid having the children drafted to the district schools. They went out for two or three days and then re-entered the Workhouse, so that those children never received any schooling. It might be said "those are not tramps, they are 'ins-and-outs.'" They were, and she mentioned them for this reason to show that the pauper did not like his children removed from him, and that the tramp would not like it. The tramp was a worthless character; but there was some good in every character, and tramps were, as a rule, affectionate to their children. If they could use that affection to deter them from vagrancy, they would be going to the root of the matter.

A MEMBER: If they took people's children away from them there would be many more thrown on the rates.

Mr JARMAN (Exeter) seconded the resolution proposed by Mr Gardner, and added that at Exeter the Board was about to expend £1000 in providing extra accommodation for the two nights' detention of tramps.

The CHAIRMAN said he regretted not having heard the papers read. The first, he understood, rather recommended the lenient treatment of tramps; the second took the opposite view. It was always a very desirable thing that they should hear both sides of a question. His own county, Wiltshire, suffered a great deal in the past from vagrancy, as there were important arterial roads from east to west crossing the county, and when trade was bad in Bristol and South Wales there was a great influx of people, many *bonâ fide* working men looking for employment. But the ordinary vagrant belonged to a class by himself, his ranks being recruited from time to time by persons who had seen better days. The common tramp was a person who was always seeking work and never finding it. Though, when Mr Albert Pell was in Parliament, it was considered that two nights' detention was an infringement of the liberty of the subject, the plan had since been adopted with beneficial results, but it should not be regarded as a



cast-iron regulation. It had been found possible in Wiltshire to relax the rule in some cases and allow men to continue their journey next morning. There was one sound proposition submitted to the meeting, that there should be uniformity of action. It might be a counsel of perfection. They lived in days of local government, and that implied diversity, but in such a matter as the treatment of tramps they should aim at uniformity of practice. Persons who objected to uniformity of treatment were usually those who had no practical acquaintance with the subject. They underrated or they did not know the tramp—what a wonderfully well-informed person he was as to how different Unions were administered. There was an extraordinary amount of interchange of opinion and a freemasonry among them that they found out everything. Mrs Fuller made a most valuable contribution to the discussion by suggesting that they should get hold of the children of the vagrants. They lived in days when the doctrine of heredity was being forced upon them not only by the scientist but by the novelist, and if they investigated the birth, bringing up, and environment of the vagrant, who was there would venture to pass too stern a judgment on the class who could not naturally command sympathy? Though the great majority of the tramps might be beyond reform, yet if even the smallest percentage could be reclaimed by the efforts of Poor Law workers, then that was a consideration which lighted up the paths of those who studied this most interesting but in some ways not over attractive branch of Poor Law administration. (Cheers.)

The resolution proposed by Mr Gardner (Wootton Bassett) and seconded by Mr Jarman (Exeter) was then read as follows:—

1. "That, in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable that all Unions should enforce the rule of two nights' detention for casual paupers, believing as it does that it has proved a satisfactory means of decreasing the number of tramps."

2. "That a copy of this resolution be sent to all the Boards of Guardians in the South-Western District."

This was adopted.

In reply to a member,

Mr GARDNER pointed out that Guardians had the power to put men to other work than stone breaking, if desirable.

A motion to the effect that the police and other authorities should publish the fact that a mid-day meal was supplied to vagrants in certain Workhouses (with a view to warning charitably disposed persons, and the prevention of begging) was lost.

Mr PRICE, as the reader of Mr Fox's paper, in replying on the discussion, said it had been admitted that the vagrants could not be got rid of, and that they were a menace to the community. If they repressed it in one place it was certain to spring up in another. The best thing was to deprive vagrants of all pretexts for begging; and then to urge the magistrates to act with the utmost severity in all cases of the kind. They would never make an honest man of the tramp, and the best thing was to make him feel that his position was very



unpleasant. Rightly regarded, Mr Fox had propounded anything but a "sentimental view" of the subject.

Mr WEBBER (Falmouth) having been informed that resolutions on the subjects to be dealt with at the next day's sitting would be received, the proceedings were adjourned.

In the evening the Delegates dined together at the Duke of Cornwall Hotel, an excellent dinner, at which Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice presided, being provided.

### THURSDAY, 21ST JULY.

Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE, M.P., at 10.30 A.M., again took the chair.

The first business was the election of officers, &c. The following were declared elected:—

*The Standing Committee*:—Cornwall, Mr T. Webber; Devon, Mr A. H. A. Hamilton; Somerset, Mr Huntley Thring; Dorset, Mr H. H. Palairt; Wiltshire, Mrs Fuller.

*Representatives at Central District Committee*:—Messrs Clutterbuck, Wiltshire; A. King, Somerset; and J. W. Spear, Devon.

*The Honorary Secretary*:—The President mentioned that for more than a year Miss Chapman had acted as Hon. Sec., and they were grateful to her. (Cheers.) In the name of the Conference he cordially thanked Miss Chapman for her services. Having received an appointment under the Local Government Board which took up a great deal of her time, it would be hardly possible for her, indeed it might be inconsistent with her duties, to continue to act as Hon. Secretary. Since Miss Chapman had received the appointment the secretarial duties had been performed by Mr C. R. M. Clapp, of Exeter.

Mr HAMILTON proposed the election of Mr Clapp as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. From his experience of Mr Clapp's ability he could assure the Conference the duties would be carried out with the greatest efficiency.

The CHAIRMAN said Mr Clapp had had a great deal of hard work and had done it exceedingly well, and they all thanked him for stepping into the vacancy created by the retirement of Miss Chapman. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was unanimously carried.

Mr CLAPP expressed his pleasure in accepting the position. He should like to thank Mr C. G. Brian (local Hon. Secretary), who had made excellent arrangements. If the Conference ever visited Plymouth again he hoped they would be so fortunate as to secure Mr Brian's services. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN said he voiced the wish of the Conference when he assured Mr Brian that they were deeply grateful to him for his able services as local Hon. Secretary.

*The 1899 Conference*:—Miss Geare proposed, and Mr Page seconded, that the 1899 Conference be held at Exeter. Mr F. S. Moore submitted Yeovil, and Mr T. Webber, Truro. Mr Clapp proposed that

Taunton be selected for next year's Conference. Major Tucker seconded. Mr Clapp believed that great good would result if Taunton was visited. It would arouse an interest in the Conference throughout that portion of Somerset, and also the north of Devon. Mr Webber withdrew Truro in favour of Exeter. In the first round of voting Exeter received 34 votes, Taunton 10, and Yeovil 4. In the final round between Exeter and Taunton the former received 39 votes and Taunton 4, Exeter being therefore selected. It was decided that the Conference should be held during July, the date to be fixed by the Committee.

Mr E. MONTEFIORE MICHOLLS was then called upon to read his paper.

## THE TREATMENT OF PAUPER EPILEPTIC CHILDREN.

BY MR E. MONTEFIORE MICHOLLS,  
*Chairman of the National Society for Employment of Epileptics.*

IT may perhaps be well that I should at the outset define to some extent the scope of this paper. In the first place, I must explain that I propose to deal only with sane epileptic children, as those epileptics who are imbecile may, I think, for most purposes be classified with, and treated as, imbeciles rather than as epileptics. Next, I must confess that the use of the word "pauper" in the title of this paper is perhaps rather a misnomer, for I do not propose to deal so much with those children who are actually paupers, as with those who are, so to speak, *potentially* paupers. The number of epileptic children under the care of the Poor Law is exceedingly small. A few years ago, at the instance of the National Society for Employment of Epileptics, the Local Government Board procured returns of the number of sane epileptic children and adults in the workhouses and infirmaries of the metropolis, and it was found that there were in all only twenty-two such children in those institutions. These returns did not include the pauper schools, and to complete the figures, therefore, it is necessary to incorporate the results of the very careful investigation made a short time previously by Dr Warner in the



Union and District Schools of the metropolis, which showed that amongst 9,831 pauper children only five were epileptics. Thus it would appear that in the whole of the metropolitan area the number of epileptic children under the care of the Poor Law—exclusive of course of imbeciles—does not exceed two or three dozen.

The treatment of epileptic children would therefore at first sight seem to be, from the Poor Law point of view, a subject of comparatively small importance. But when we look at the statistics relating to *adult* epileptic paupers, the question assumes a very different aspect. The returns to which I have previously referred showed that there were in the workhouses and infirmaries of London no less than 602 sane epileptic adults. It is usually estimated that the whole number of sane epileptics both amongst children and adults is about one per thousand of the population. Taking this ratio as a basis for calculation we may draw from the Local Government Board returns the two following conclusions :—

- 1st. That the percentage of pauperism amongst epileptic *children* is not materially higher than amongst the child population generally.
- 2nd. That the percentage of pauperism amongst epileptic *adults* is incomparably higher than amongst the adult population generally, no less than one in every five of the epileptic adults of the metropolitan area being inmates of a workhouse or Poor Law infirmary.

The returns to which I have referred were made in 1893. Let us imagine another similar census to be taken twenty years hence. The epileptics that will be included in that future census as adult paupers are the non-pauper epileptic children of to-day. Thus the Poor Law is really, though indirectly, concerned, not only with those who are actually paupers, but with that far larger number of epileptic children who are likely to become paupers when they grow up. Moreover, there



is another aspect of the matter which must not be forgotten. The epileptic is liable in the absence of proper care to constant mental deterioration. If, therefore, we contemplate the methods of dealing with the epileptic children of to-day, and consider what is likely to be their condition as adults say twenty or thirty years hence, we must remember that not only will one-fifth of them be found in the workhouses and infirmaries, but probably a far larger proportion will have drifted into a state of insanity, and will be found in the asylums or in the imbecile wards of the workhouses. Epileptic paupers, sane and insane, throughout the country number many thousands, and the burden of their maintenance is a heavy charge upon the ratepayers. Epileptic children have hitherto been neglected by the community, and as epileptic adults they exact from the community the penalty of this neglect.

It is unanimously agreed by all physicians that the thing most necessary for epileptics, both in childhood and in later years, is regular occupation, in the absence of which their minds inevitably deteriorate. But epileptic children, owing to the disturbance and danger caused by their fits, are in many instances excluded from attendance at the ordinary schools, and thus spend their days in idleness. Moreover, home influences, even in the best homes amongst the poor, are usually not so beneficial to epileptics as they are to ordinary children. On these points I may perhaps quote from one of the Annual Reports of the Society which I represent :—

Within the jurisdiction of the London School Board there are 300 epileptic children permanently exempted from school attendance, and probably a far larger number whose attendance, owing to their disease, is very irregular. Thus in London alone there are many hundreds — possibly even thousands—of epileptic children growing up either totally uneducated, or educated very insufficiently. In the country the proportion is probably still larger, for the longer distances from school increase the difficulty of attendance. We know well that for ordinary children no “Home” can be a real

substitute for "*home*." The discipline of an institution, tempered though it be with lovingkindness, can never replace the magic influences of family life : the mutual affection of a matron or teacher and the children under her care may be a beautiful, but can never be a perfect, imitation of the divinely-ordered natural relationships of father and son, mother and daughter, sister and brother. But the influences of home, humanising as they are to the normal child, are not infrequently pernicious to the epileptic. These weakly children, with their ill-balanced, unstable minds, stand in far greater need than healthy boys and girls of systematic care, of encouragement to regular and orderly habits—in a word, of mental discipline—tender and loving, yet firm and consistent discipline. But the mother's heart goes out with infinite tenderness towards these afflicted little ones ; she loves them, alas ! not wisely but too well. "I have so little to give my child," said a fond mother of this type, "that it is hard if I cannot give him his own way." The epileptic is often by nature endowed in more than ordinary degree with affectionate, moral, and religious feeling. But his impulsive disposition may be so terribly perverted, owing to this partiality and indulgence of his parents, that his natural amiability gives place to caprice, selfishness, and even cruelty.

It must be admitted, that however well epileptic children might be cared for, there must always be a considerable proportion who, when grown up, would be incapable of supporting themselves in any way, and who must be cared for at the expense of the community ; but there can be little doubt that the lack of education, and the bad home influences referred to in the passage just quoted, are the causes of a great deal of the mischief, and that if these causes were removed, pauperism and insanity amongst epileptic adults would be vastly diminished.

There is therefore a considerable work to be done in regard to epileptic children, and it is a work which very closely concerns Poor Law Guardians, though possibly its actual performance, as in the case of blind and deaf children, comes rather within the scope of the school authorities than of the Poor Law.

Acting on this view, the Education Department last year appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire into the question. A large number of



witnesses were examined, and after a very careful inquiry the Report of the Committee was published a few months ago. In it the reality and extent of the evil is fully recognised, as will be seen from the sub-joined extract :—

Children who are afflicted with severe epilepsy at present commonly do not attend school, both because it is dangerous for them to go through the streets unaccompanied by a grown person, and because of the disturbance which they cause in school, and the refusal of schools to receive them. *Inasmuch as employment is necessary for their well-being, epileptic children who are absent from school deteriorate.* Mr Gaskell, the Secretary of the National Society for Employment of Epileptics, thus describes such children :—"By far the worst cases that we have, and the most hopeless cases, are those that have been epileptic from childhood. That is due generally, but not always, to the fact that they have been uneducated. In some cases they have been educated, but usually the home conditions of an epileptic are very bad. It is very difficult in a poor family to deal with an epileptic. Usually he is spoiled, and yet, on the other hand, the family hold aloof from him. He becomes often more or less of an outcast, and feels a sense of aloofness from his relations. So he suffers from two almost opposite things—on the one hand being spoilt, and on the other hand feeling himself an outcast and a pariah. The want of education intensifies this in two ways. If a child is uneducated it causes him to be more at home, and more under these bad home influences, and at the same time it leaves his mind unoccupied, and I think that there can be no doubt that an unoccupied mind is the very worst thing for epilepsy. Certainly we find that the occupation at the Epileptic Colony not only effects an improvement as regards their disease, but it improves them much morally and mentally. Usually when epileptics come to us they have a thoroughly downcast look ; they seem utterly dejected ; they seem to have felt their dependent position ; and the occupation at the colony, and the feeling that they have something to do, takes their minds off this, and they rapidly assume a more cheerful look."

The report proceeds to state that for these children the witnesses unanimously agreed that special provision should be made, and the Committee themselves adopt this view. They recommend that such treatment should be provided in homes exclusively confined to children suffering from epilepsy ; and they define the



children who should be admissible to these homes as those who "being capable of benefiting by education, are unfit, by reason of epilepsy, to attend the ordinary schools." They recommend that the powers of the School Boards should be extended by the Legislature so as to enable them either to establish such homes, or to pay for the cost of maintenance and education of epileptic children in voluntary homes. As regards the treatment of these children in such homes, the Committee report that "no special forms of instruction are required for epileptic children of normal intellect. The instruction should, as nearly as possible, resemble that of an elementary school." As regards manual instruction, they report that "while outdoor occupation is particularly desirable on account of the health of epileptic children, outdoor employment is not the most promising means of livelihood for an epileptic ; and in his manual training, the importance of fitting him to earn his living should always be kept in view. Subject to certain safeguards it is proposed that the school authorities should be empowered to send cases to homes without the consent of the parents ; but whereas in other suitable cases it would be the duty of the school authorities to deal with these children in this way, in the case of the parents objecting it is recommended that the school authority should have a discretion, and should not be compelled by statute to take children from their parents in order to send them to the special homes. It is proposed that the educational age should, for epileptic children, be extended to sixteen, as has already been done in the case of of blind and deaf children.

Such are in brief the recommendations of the Departmental Committee as regards non-pauper epileptic children. In regard to those epileptic children who are already paupers, the number, as I have mentioned before, is exceedingly small—so small that the establishment of special institutions for them would

probably be out of the question. The best way of dealing with them, when voluntary homes such as those recommended by the Departmental Committee are established, would probably be to send them to such homes, in the same way as it is proposed that the School Boards should send non-pauper cases.

In conclusion, I feel that I ought to apologise for discussing at such length a question with which the Poor Law is concerned indirectly rather than directly.

The CHAIRMAN stated that Dr H. Rayner, Lecturer and Physician for Mental Diseases at St Thomas' Hospital, London, who was admitted to be one of the greatest living authorities on the subject, had intended to be present to read the paper, but was detained by a somewhat similar (and previous) engagement at Edinburgh. In his absence the paper would be read by Mr Clapp, after which discussion and resolutions would be permitted.

## THE TREATMENT OF PAUPER IMBECILE AND FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN.

BY DR H. RAYNER.

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THE Poor-Law administration of this country has probably to deal with no subject of greater importance than that of the care and treatment of defective-minded children.

Social failures, under which term may be included chronic paupers and vagrants, habitually immoral women, habitual drunkards, the insane and criminal classes, are being shown, by evidence accumulating on all hands, to be in large measure simply the adult development of defective-minded children.

That this development can be prevented to a considerable extent by suitable care and treatment in early life is an opinion that is firmly held by many who have had experience in dealing with these classes. If this be true, the importance of this subject as a possible means of avoiding a vast amount of human suffering,

and of largely economising the expenditure of public money, is obvious. Although additional effort and expenditure may in the first instance be involved, this will in time probably result in the largest economic harvest that any expenditure could possibly produce.

Prevention is ever better than cure, and this old truism has never had a better opportunity for illustrating its truth than in the possible prevention of "social failures."

Our Poor Law and our philanthropic activities, a cynical critic might say, are not adapted to the removal of these burdens on society, but rather to their increase. The habitual pauper, the habitually immoral, the habitually drunken, and even the insane, who in a less charitable community than ours would cease to exist, by the very admirable philanthropic and charitable organisations found in England, have their lives prolonged, and are enabled in many instances to bequeath to the community a legacy of children like unto themselves. The extent to which such legacies may go is illustrated by the well-known case worked out in New York State, that of a female whose descendants to the number of some hundreds were "social failures" of one kind or another, whose cost to the State could be estimated in tens of thousands of pounds.

The question whether by increased care of defective children in childhood such developments can be avoided is therefore most worthy the consideration of those concerned in the administration of the Poor Law.

The report of the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children, recently issued, gives a vast amount of information on this important subject; it contains very complete systematic recommendations in regard to the mode of dealing with these classes, and of the legislative enactments that will be needed to carry out these recommendations. The committee was appointed as the result of an application by the



London School Board to the Education Department for increased grants in aid of the special classes for defective-minded children, which had been formed on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c.

This report deals exclusively with the feeble-minded who are "not idiots or imbeciles," and it will be convenient first to consider these feeble-minded folk apart from the idiots and imbeciles. The real distinction between the two classes is of course only in degree of mental deficiency.

The report suggests that the term "feeble-minded," or better still, "special class children," should denote those who "cannot be properly taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods," but who can be taught in special classes, and do not need the institutional care necessary for the idiot and imbecile.

These "special class" children are not characterised only by their deficient power of learning, their habits and conduct usually show that defective power of self-control which foreshadows the defect in after life; moreover, they have associated defects of health, suffering from low nutrition, nervous diseases, struma, syphilis, &c.; and lastly, they show to medical examination peculiarities of function, and slight malformations of various kinds.

These slight malformations, which I need not particularise, are not of importance in themselves, but only for their significance. They are found not only in the special classes, as has been shown by Dr Warner's examination of 100,000 children in the London schools, but they are found still more markedly and exaggeratedly in idiots and imbeciles, and are strikingly absent in the most healthy and able-minded children.

These same malformations, moreover, are found to exist to a much greater extent in adult criminals, prostitutes, and lunatics, than in the normal adult population. The conclusion may fairly be drawn that

while some individuals possessing these deformations may grow up to be normal members of society, a large proportion join the social failure class. This proportion probably depends on the care, attention, and education that can be given to them. Many who belong to the well-to-do classes at the present time probably escape the fate that would otherwise befall them, by the care and attention given to their education and training.

The recognition or discrimination of these special class children, the report recommends, should be provided for by the appointment of medical officers, whose duty it should be to examine and give a certificate in all cases of non-attendance at school on the ground of mental or physical defect.

The London School Board has, indeed, already appointed two such officers, one of each sex, to deal with these children.

The certificates of these medical officers, it is suggested, should form a basis not only for admission to the special class, but, if the mental deficiency proves of greater extent, to the Imbecile Asylum.

The admission of the child to the class, it is proposed, should be the result of an inquiry, at which there should be present, the child's past teacher (who would present a written report in scheduled form), also the teacher of the special class to which the child is to be admitted, if possible a parent of the child, as well as Her Majesty's Inspector, and the medical officer of the school authority.

The medical officer, as a result of the inquiry, should either make a recommendation for the admission of the child to the class, or state the reasons why he does not consider it a suitable case, if he rejects it.

Appeal against the decision of the medical officer, it is recommended, should be to the Educational Department, who would refer such appeals to their own medical adviser.

The Committee recommends that records should be made of the family history of such children at their examination, and of their progress in the special classes. It further advises a yearly medical examination of all such classes ; individual examinations whenever necessary ; and that the teachers should be guided by medical advice in dealing with the children. There can be little doubt that such records, in time, would afford most important instruction, in regard to the treatment of such children.

This careful medical examination, moreover, will lead to the detection of temporary and curable conditions of health which often produce mental dulness and backwardness ; such, for example, as obstruction of the nose by growths, and several other physical conditions. These, if undetected, might result in the child's obtaining little or no education.

The special classes must of course be supplied by specially trained teachers. No system of training is as yet available ; but the classes already established in London, Leicester, and other places, will afford opportunities for teachers desirous of taking up this branch of work, to obtain instruction and practical experience, by acting as assistant teachers for a few months, prior to assuming the responsibility of a special class. The extent of such experience, and the examinations which it may be necessary to institute to determine the fitness of such teachers for the work, has yet to be systematised.

The training of the children in the special classes will provide very largely for muscular training and development.

The experience of some of the prisons and reformatories in America bears strong evidence to the great value of such training in aiding the development of the intelligence, even in more advanced life, and its importance in early life is very great indeed, as testified by the experience of the existing imbecile schools. The report of the Departmental Committee



makes very careful recommendations with regard to physical exercises, elementary manual instruction and games, as well as in regard to the subjects of instruction, and the duration of lessons, &c.

The proportion of children requiring special class treatment is estimated in the report at 1 per cent. This corresponds to what has been found to be necessary in several continental countries in which this system has been carried out. The experience in these countries also shows that after a year or two of teaching in the special classes, a certain number are enabled to take their places in ordinary school classes.

I am inclined to the opinion that the proportion is more than 1 per cent., but that it may be reduced to that level by the improvement and transfer of children to ordinary classes.

The "initial age" at which it is proposed to deal with these children is "seven years," it being considered that up to that age the ordinary infant school with its kindergarten exercises is sufficient.

"Retention" in the classes to the age of fourteen is recommended, with power to retain until sixteen on the special advice of the medical officer who supervises the class. This power is very desirable, since in many of these children at the age of fourteen the mental and physical development is only that of a child of ten.

Indeed there will be needed some supervision after school age in a certain proportion of cases of these children, similar to that afforded to the children leaving the workhouse schools by the Metropolitan Society for Befriending Young Servants, and in others an apprenticeship or other arrangement for training in industrial habits would be desirable. The size of each class, it is recommended, should be limited to twenty children on the roll, except where three or more classes are grouped together, when the third or fourth class might take as many as thirty.

The mixture of the sexes in the special classes is not objected to, provided that suitable provision is made for those who are under fourteen years of age.

The special classes being limited to twenty children, it results that a town of twenty thousand inhabitants would certainly require one, and that no class could be formed with advantage in towns with a population under ten thousand.

It follows from this, however, that children in smaller towns, or remote from such classes, would require to be brought within reach of them, and this could only be accomplished by boarding out of such isolated cases within reach of a special class.

There is, however, a certain number of defective-minded children in whom the deficiency is moral as well as intellectual; they often appear to have little moral sense, and to be unteachable in regard to truth or honesty. I see many of these among the out-patients at St Thomas' Hospital, and most commonly find that their parents are themselves deficient, being either unable to exercise control from affection or from weakness of will, from drunkenness or criminality, or often from the conditions of their occupation compelling them to leave these children uncontrolled throughout the day. These children are certain to grow up into social failures if they are not properly cared for.

The report makes no recommendation for the boarding out of such cases, but I am of opinion that they need boarding out under judicious care, even when they reside within reach of a special class, since any advantage that they may derive from the special teaching would be undone by the bad influences of the home life.

The term "special class" children as defined by the report includes those who are unable to be taught in the ordinary classes by reason of physical defect. Of "epileptic children" you have already heard in

the paper read at this meeting by Mr Montefiore Micholls.

But beyond these are deaf and dumb, whom, as you are aware, in old days often grew up as imbeciles ; and the blind, who also in old times rarely became self-supporting. For these, when there is associated feeble-mindedness, the Committee recommends that "special class" arrangements should be made in institutions for the blind and deaf respectively.

The means of teaching having been provided, there still remains the difficulty of bringing the children to these special classes.

In the first place, under the existing law, there is no power to enforce attendance at a special class. It has been suggested that this may be accomplished by first refusing them admission to the ordinary school, and then prosecuting for non-attendance if they are not sent to the special class.

Probably if the term "special class" be adopted, there will be much less reluctance on the part of parents in sending their children than in sending them to classes designated "feeble-minded." There is, after all, a good deal in a name.

Secondly, attendance at these classes may be difficult, from the troubles into which such children get on their way to and from school, or from their utter inability to go by themselves ; the tax on the time or means of the parents in conveying such cases to or from school is a heavy burden, and the report recommends that "conveyance or guidance to the special classes should be provided where this is necessary."

Beyond all these cases is a very small residuum of children whose physical defect renders it impossible that they can attend or be conveyed to any class, and whose only possibility of being taught rests on the teaching being brought to them in their own homes.

These children, the report considers, offer a fair field for voluntary benevolent assistance. It is to be feared,



however, that such cases, between the two stools of voluntary and Poor Law assistance, might come to the ground. It would therefore be preferable that teaching for such cases should be compulsorily found, unless it could be shown that it was provided by charitable aid. The number of such cases is of course very inconsiderable. To recapitulate and summarise the needs of the children who are not idiots or imbeciles, but who from mental or physical deficiency are unteachable in ordinary school classes, are :—

1. *Special classes* under *special teachers*.
2. The provision of boarding out.
  - a. For those whose homes are remote from the special classes.
  - b. For those “special class” children whose home influences negative the special class teaching.
  - c. The provision of special teaching in institutions for the deaf and dumb.
3. The *conveyance* or *guidance* of special children to special classes where necessary.
4. The teaching in their own homes of those who cannot be conveyed to a special class.

The provision of the special class and all that appertains to it would of course fall to the School Boards, by whom a considerable number have been already established in some of the larger towns, and the conveyance should probably be provided by the same authority.

The boarding out would fall on the Poor Law, and the Committee is of opinion that the powers of Guardians are probably the same in relation to these deficient children as those which they possess under 25 & 26 Vict. c. 43 in regard to the “blind and deaf.”

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The care of the Imbeciles and Idiots is also a

matter of very great importance, in regard to which very great progress remains to be made.

The Census of 1891 shows that the mentally defective persons in England and Wales, under the age of fifteen years, to have been 5,176, of whom only 964 were in asylums or institutions for idiots.

So that only about one in five were in institutions for treatment, the rest remaining with their friends, or being in workhouses.

Of the 964 in institutions for the cure of disease, a very considerable proportion must have been in lunatic asylums, where there is no special means of treatment for such cases, where indeed the conditions are utterly detrimental, so much so that in the Hanwell County Asylum for many years no cases under the age of fourteen years were admitted.

If these deductions are made, the proportion under proper care is very small, and it is to be feared that of this small number a large proportion are not admitted until several years of possible school life has been lost, since the Census shows that while 1 in 5 of those over ten years of age were in institutions, only 1 in 8 of those between five and ten years were so provided for. The reason for this is that admission to an institution is avoided until, with increasing age, the idiot becomes troublesome and unmanageable at home. So that in the small proportion of cases admitted to training, valuable time has already been lost. The large majority, however, under existing conditions, grow up in their own homes to be helpless imbeciles, causing great loss and suffering to their relatives, and becoming finally a permanent charge on the Poor Law.

It is right to point out that the Census returns are thought to be inexact, and that the number of idiots and imbeciles in England has been put much higher.

Dr Ireland, one of our oldest workers in this field, estimates, that of patients discharged after full training in imbecile schools (and by full training he means those

who have been admitted at five or six, and remained until fourteen years), 10 per cent. are self-supporting, another 10 per cent. are capable of self-support, and 20 per cent. are useful to their friends, and can live at home.

Dr Seguin, another authority, estimated that 40 per cent. should become capable of the ordinary transactions of life, under friendly control, and of working as two-thirds of a man. That 25 to 30 per cent. come nearer and nearer to manhood, till some will defy scrutiny, as compared with ordinary young men and women.

Now, if these views are even approximately correct, it is obvious that there is an opportunity of effecting a considerable economy by training those imbecile children to be in so large a measure self-supporting, instead of allowing them to become inevitable burdens on the Poor Law.

That these children should on no consideration be sent into the wards of an ordinary asylum, where they can only learn to imitate the worst of what they see about them, and where none of the special training which they require can be given them, is I think too obvious to need discussion.

Those who are in workhouses are in little better case than those who are in asylums, and could in a large majority of instances be easily removed to proper institutions. Parents who have the custody of such children are often very hard to persuade that it is the best thing for the child to go to a training school; but my own experience is that the persistently unreasonable are a very small minority, and that most yield when the necessity of the step is pointed out to them by a competent adviser.

The law, however, should certainly provide, if it does not already do so, for the fining of parents who decline to send their children to be trained, when the



children have been certified as capable of being benefited by training.

Idiot and imbecile children divide into two classes, those who are teachable and those who are unteachable; the latter comprising cases who require merely careful nursing.

Now the special teaching and arrangements for an imbecile school, such as the Darenth School, are costly, and it would certainly seem desirable that the unteachable infirm class should not be a burden on the schools. This view has impressed itself on the authorities of the Barony Parish of Glasgow, who propose to make separate accommodation for the two classes.

It is, I think, desirable that the separation should be made, and that they should be under distinct responsibility, but that the two classes should be closely associated, so that in the event of its being necessary to transfer a child from the school to the hospital, or *vice versa*, this could be accomplished without difficulty.

Schools and hospitals for imbecile children cannot, however, be provided by every county, the numbers in one county often not being enough to supply such institutions, so that combination of counties or districts would be necessary to establish such institutions.

The care of the adult imbecile, it must be remembered, is of equal importance with the training of the imbecile child.

The age of sixteen, which has been fixed on as a limit of school training, is undoubtedly too rigid. Imbeciles of sixteen are still in many instances less developed physically as well as mentally than children of a much earlier age, and are often capable of still further training and improvement. A hard and fast rule of this kind, therefore, probably results in the dismissal of imbeciles before they have been developed as far as possible, and under conditions which some-

times undo any good they may have derived from the training.

An ordinary youth requires several years of training to acquire a handicraft or knowledge of an occupation, and it is not possible in a large majority of instances that these imbeciles at the age of sixteen should have acquired such knowledge as to render them capable of being to any large extent self-supporting. Probably this rigid limitation is one cause of the results of training in the schools being less satisfactory than they might be.

The adult imbeciles who have reached the limit of age, and are dismissed from school, are variously distributed.

A few return to their own homes, and become merged in the general population ; a few more, having no homes, go to the Workhouses, where they run the risk of becoming chronic paupers. One such case was recently rescued from this by the After Care Association, by putting the girl in a home and training her in house work for six months. This enabled her to obtain a situation in domestic service. The ordinary training homes of course exclude such cases from their aid, although none need it more.

A considerable number of imbeciles over sixteen may be employed under the care of the members of their own family in a great variety of ways, as in household work, gardening, farming, or in simple monotonous occupations.

Others who have no relatives may be employed in domestic work in the idiot asylums, or in other institutions where they are to a certain extent shielded ; and others of the female sex may become inmates of the charitable institutions recently started for the care of feeble-minded young women. A large proportion are unfit for anything but continued care in custodial institutions. The adult imbecile asylum which these require should, I consider, be distinct from the lunatic

asylum, and should not receive demented lunatics. Such an asylum should be associated with, although under distinct medical control from that of the imbecile school. It should be managed, as far as possible, on the principles of industrial establishments, and opportunities should be given, to those capable of making further improvement, of perfecting or improving themselves in the occupations they have acquired in the schools. Formerly several occupations which could be made productive were not allowed to be established in institutions, on the plea that they were competing with outside labour. It is, however, to be remembered that the products of labour in continental prisons, lunatic and imbecile asylums, are freely imported into this country, and that any such restriction is therefore illogical. The endeavour of the managers of such institutions should be to develop any occupations as would tend to make some profit for the institution.

The adult imbecile asylum, indeed, should be as much as possible an industrial home, and might with advantage, be so styled. It should be relieved, as far as possible, of those imbeciles who were chronically violent and troublesome, whose appropriate place would be the chronic lunatic asylum.

The needs, therefore, of the imbecile and idiot class are, firstly, the discovery of such cases by the medical examination of all children not attending school on the ground of mental or physical defect.

Secondly, the bringing pressure to bear on the parents, by influence or fines, to send such children to the imbecile schools or hospitals.

Thirdly, the establishment in districts or groups of counties of an imbecile school, hospital, and asylum.

The existing law probably already provides for the carrying out of such provisions, or might without any great legislative effort be made to do so.

It may be argued that the provision of all this institutional care is very costly and without adequate



result, but I believe that enough has been advanced to show that the neglect of these cases is still more expensive, and I trust that this congress will heartily approve of the principles I have thus briefly sketched for dealing with the feeble-minded and imbecile.

[NOTE BY DR RAYNER.—As it has been pointed out to me that my recommendation as to *boarding out* weak-minded children might be misunderstood, I wish to say that I meant my remarks to apply solely to boarding them out in small specially organised Homes or Institutions.]

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### DISCUSSION.

Mr MICHOLLS said he wished to add one word, by way of appendix, as the representative of the colony for epileptics. Two homes were being built, and would shortly be completed, and in the one they proposed to take boys, in the other girls. The money for the purpose had been generously provided by Mr Passmore Edwards. He hoped that the public would assist them, and if such legislation as he had suggested was to come to pass, the colony would soon have an opportunity of doing good work.

Copies of the Fifth Annual Report of the National Society for the Employment of Epileptics (offices 12 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.) were then placed on the table, the CHAIRMAN remarking that the Conference would doubtless bear in mind Mr Micholls' appeal.

Mr GARDNER (Cricklade) suggested that the papers should be separately discussed.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think it would be practicable to discuss them separately. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Sec. of the Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences) said he was sorry Dr Rayner was not present to explain exactly what he meant by boarding out the children in question. Dr Rayner did not, he felt sure, mean boarding out as they knew it for ordinary children.\* Every one present was convinced that the question of the treatment of feeble-minded and epileptic children was one of the most important that could engage their attention. As to the causes of the increase in the number of lunatics, he did not know whether it was that many insane persons who were formerly kept at home were now sent to special institutions, or whether there was really an increase in the number of the afflicted; but in the prevention of insanity they must get at the children, and if necessary spend a large sum of money now in order to save a very much larger sum in the future. It was always distressing to him to

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\* N.B.—Dr Rayner has since notified that by "boarding out" he means boarding out in specially organised homes and institutions and not in ordinary households.

see a number of imbecile children doing nothing in the Workhouses. It was undesirable to mix up imbeciles and lunatics, while if imbeciles were mixed with the sane they only picked up the worst points of the sane, and did not learn any of the best. It was most desirable that imbecile children should be placed in separate institutions, where they could receive the special care and attention which it was desirable they should have. He was glad to hear that the County Councils were taking up the matter. They might by combination or otherwise solve the problem of the provision of special institutions for these classes. He recently investigated the question in Surrey, and found that there were in the Workhouses of the county quite a sufficiently large number of imbecile children to warrant the provision of special institutions for them. They would hear a great deal about the expense, but it would save a much greater expenditure in the future. (Hear, hear.)

Miss MASON (Local Government Board Inspector of Boarded-out Children) said she had had thirteen years' experience, and had come to the conclusion that it was highly necessary to have special institutions for the weak-minded and epileptic children. She thought, with Mr Chance, that Dr Rayner could not mean boarding out the children in ordinary cottages with persons who had had no special experience of the cure of such cases. She was glad to think they were not often so boarded out. During the last fortnight she had found two boys and one girl, all feeble-minded, boarded out in the ordinary way. The boys were the butt of the village, and there was no possibility of finding anything for them to do. The girl was a most miserable creature, described by her custodian as "artful, cunning, dirty, obstinate, and unbearable." The only thing to do was to send her to a special place for training. The girl was thirteen now, and it was impossible for her to go to service. The last case she (Miss Mason) met with was in a cottage in which she took lodgings, in order to have actual knowledge of the condition of the people she had to supervise. (Cheers.) It was that of a boy of fifteen. A benevolent lady had boarded the boy there for 8s. a week, and the poor woman who kept the cottage declared that £8 a week would not pay her. He had been utterly "spoilt" at home, and when they tried to prevent him from doing outrageous things, he retaliated by blowing a tin whistle. The boy was consequently sent to London in the charge of the lady's groom, and the last she (Miss Mason) saw of the poor lad was that he was at the back of the train shouting and holding out his cap for pence. That boy was to be sent to the home at Chalfont St Peter, where he would be properly trained and looked after. These cases wanted not merely ordinary attendance, but the care of persons who had resolved to devote their lives to the work. These children ought not to be treated in a haphazard way in country villages, but should be placed in proper institutions, of which she hoped many would be founded. (Cheers.)



Mr JARMAN (Exeter) said that he did not see why the matter should not be taken up by the County Councils, or better still, by the County Councils in co-operation with the Guardians. He hoped that all the Guardians in the West of England would get the official Report of the Conference,\* and read, mark, and digest the papers which had been read that morning. (Hear, hear.) There could be no question something ought to be done. It was a matter in which the various authorities would have to co-operate. If, for instance, the various Poor Law districts could co-operate, the expense of providing special establishments for the treatment of the feeble-minded and epileptic need not be very formidable. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs BAX (Stoke Damerel) said that Guardians had a great difficulty to get the children into existing institutions. She knew of an imbecile child being placed in a Workhouse infirmary and causing a great deal of trouble and annoyance to sick patients.

Miss GEARE (Exeter) said some Guardians would raise an objection because of the expense, and prefer to keep weak-minded children in the Workhouse instead of sending them to properly established homes. She favoured Dr Rayner's system of institutions, and suggested that medical officers should have compulsory powers to remove the children from the Workhouse. The Local Government Board ought to appoint a Committee to inspect the institutions abroad, and especially in Germany, and the information gained could be communicated to Boards of Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Dr LEY (Newton Abbot) said it was monstrous that imbecile children should be allowed to mix with the inmates of the Workhouses; they frequently got worse instead of better. There could be no doubt that some scheme would have to be adopted to get rid of the present unsatisfactory state of things. Boards of Guardians would not do anything in the matter unless compelled because they feared the expense. It should be made illegal for any Board to keep imbeciles in a Workhouse unless they were properly looked after and supervised. The good effects of proper training for these poor creatures, whose brains were not much more developed than a monkey's, could be seen at the idiot asylum, Starcross. The change that took place in many instances was wonderful; the inmates were trained to do useful work, and very good indeed they often became at mechanical operations, such as wood carving and the like. He would not say that they all turned out to be capable citizens, but the majority of them were taught to be "half-citizens" working towards their own maintenance. The question frequently arose, "What is the cause of imbecility?" Many attributed it to drunkenness, syphilis, and other causes. The cause of imbecility was not due half as much to drunkenness and disease as to prolonged parturition, or, in other words, protracted labour when the child came into the world, due to

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\* Messrs King & Son, Bridge Street, Westminster. 1s. (N.B. —Guardians are specially empowered to purchase these Reports at the public expense.)



the malformation of women by reason of tight lacing of the corsets. He could quote the most eminent authorities for the statement. Where corsets were not used imbecility was almost unknown. The physical development of women would alter much that he had complained of—the use of the tennis ball and the bicycle. He looked forward to the day when imbecility would be decreasing instead of increasing, because of the modern development of women. It would be of the greatest benefit to the working classes of the country if the imbecile children could be placed in such institutions as suggested. If the Local Government Board and County Councils consulted in this matter they could speedily bring about what was desired. It was a disgrace to this country that imbeciles who could be made half-citizens should be allowed to remain in Workhouses and mix up with dissolute characters. No single Union could bring about the provision of these institutions ; but by amalgamation they could provide one for the South-Western District. Why should not the Unions of the West of England combine to provide an asylum to hold five hundred idiots ? It could be done, and there must be in that room the men who could form a Committee that could push the thing to a successful issue. He would ask Mr Preston Thomas whether he could give them a word of advice. (Hear, hear.) Should Guardians educate the Local Government Board, or should the Local Government Board educate the Guardians ?

Mr WEBBER (Falmouth) said that if the Local Government Board would not do what was asked in this matter, pressure should be brought to bear. Action would soon be taken when public opinion was aroused. Cornwall County Council spent thousands of pounds every year on technical education—classes for experiments on land, in educating farmers to make two blades of grass grow instead of one, and in teaching Cornish girls how to make the celebrated pasties so that they would not be disagreeable to those who consumed them. (Laughter.) Could not part of this money be expended in providing some sort of institution for the training of the poor imbecile ? It was a disgrace that imbeciles should be allowed to mix up with other inmates in the Workhouses, and often to tease and torment old and infirm people. If they could not have institutions for these poor creatures, they must insist on their being carefully looked after in separate rooms of the Workhouse. In Cornwall there was a Workhouse built for 130 inmates, which only contained about 30. It might be possible to make arrangements to secure this building for the purpose of an institution. He moved :—

“ That in the opinion of this Conference it is highly desirable, not only for the well-being of imbeciles themselves, but also of the indoor paupers whose comfort and happiness and the discipline of the Workhouse are interfered with, that all weak-minded persons shall have a separate building with teachers and trainers provided in each county ; failing this that separate rooms be provided in each Workhouse.”

Dr LEY seconded.

The Rev. H. N. PURCELL (St Austell) said he believed he belonged

to the Union which first took any action in the matter in Cornwall. He hoped that the resolution to be adopted by the Conference would be sent to every Union in the South-Western District, and that the question would be seriously taken up. Some years ago he attended, as a delegate, a meeting to discuss the question of an enlargement of the County Asylum, and remembered that the advisability of separating imbeciles from lunatics was emphasised by speakers on that occasion, but the County Council did not give the delegates much encouragement. He was afraid that if they were going to look to the County Councils, they would have to look a long while before anything would be done. They must do it as Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HEATH (Newton Abbot) said that particular efforts should be made to train feeble-minded children. In an institution for that purpose he had found that the work which the inmates did almost maintained many of them. Tight lacing was no doubt answerable for some of the mental weakness of the rising generation. He hoped that the Guardians, as such, would try to stem the torrent of insanity and imbecility. County Councils were not likely to do anything in the matter.

The Rev. R. W. HARMER (Stoke Damerel) said it seemed to him they had not to deal at that Conference with the causes of insanity, but the effect of it. They had the enormous responsibility of managing the imbecile and epileptic poor, and they should esteem it a privilege to grapple with the problem themselves as Guardians without crying out to the County Councils or any of the authorities. Guardians need only use the powers already entrusted to them. The asylums were overcrowded, and there was a serious question which must be faced. Why should not the Guardians of the West of England unite to establish an asylum for the feeble-minded and epileptic? (Hear, hear.)

Mr PRESTON THOMAS (Local Government Board Inspector, Western District) said no one could exaggerate the importance of the subject. It had been painfully impressed upon him years ago, especially when he visited a Workhouse and saw three generations of imbeciles. A case of that kind was enough to make one satisfied that something was wrong in the present system. It seemed to him that the care of the imbecile generally was one of the weakest parts of the Poor Law system. It must be remembered that Guardians did not avail themselves of the power they possessed in this respect. No man, woman, or child imbecile could be admitted into a Workhouse without a certificate from the medical officer of the Workhouse (after inspection) that the imbecile could associate without inconvenience to himself or other inmates. No imbecile could be legally received in a Workhouse without the certificate. In large Workhouses it was easy enough to have a special department with skilled attendants for imbeciles, but there was a difficulty with reference to small Workhouses where there were only a few imbeciles not sufficient to require the expense of a special department and attendants. Some persons put all the blame for the present system on the Local Government Board.



He had never heard Dr Ley speak without he had a fling at that body. (Laughter.) He did not know what Dr Ley really wanted; what reform in the law he wished to bring about. At present Guardians could send the imbecile children to an institution if they could be received. He agreed that the institution at Starcross was an excellent one, and that the children were well treated and benefited there. If they could multiply such institutions as that at Starcross they would be relieved of their present difficulty. Any effort of that kind should be carried out by private charity rather than at the expense of rate-payers, and if the Guardians cared to send their cases to such institutions at a moderate payment, those places would soon become practically self-supporting. (Hear, hear.)

Mr GARDNER (Cricklade) said he did not think the County Councils were likely to provide homes for the weak-minded. In his Union they had one or two such cases, but not enough to warrant a special staff or special accommodation. Proper training in such places as Starcross would, in the end, prove to be the most economical, as well as the most humane policy.

Mr PAIGE (St Germans) said he did not think that any effort would be successful unless it was made obligatory upon Guardians to remove these cases from the Unions to the special homes. There should also be a periodical inspection of the children in the Work-house, and if all cases could be treated at special institutions it would eventually result in a saving of public money, for they would not have to face an expense of £50,000 to enlarge the County Asylum. He thought that the expense should be borne by the various counties, and that there should be a special home for each county, not one great institution for the West of England. (Hear, hear.)

Mr W. J. NICHOLLS (St Austell) moved as an amendment:—“That in the opinion of this Conference it is imperative that special provision should be made for the treatment of pauper imbecile and feeble-minded children; it believes that one or more central institutions should be provided for the South-Western Poor-Law district; and it decides that each Board of Guardians included in the district shall be invited to say if it is willing to join in any well-considered scheme for the attainment of this result.

“(2) That a Committee consisting of the Officers and Standing Committee of the Conference, with Messrs W. J. Nicholls (St Austell), Rev. H. N. Purcell (St Austell), and J. W. Ley (Newton Abbot), be appointed to prepare a scheme for the consideration of the respective Boards of Guardians.”

The Rev. H. N. PURCELL seconded.

Mr WEBBER said, with the consent of his seconder, Dr Ley, he would withdraw his resolution in favour of that submitted by Mr Nicholls.

Dr LEY agreed.

Mr MOORE STEVENS (Torrington) said that the question of expense always arose. The rates were very heavy, especially in the agricultural districts, and Guardians must be chary of suggesting any-



thing that might make them more burdensome. He quite agreed with Mr Preston Thomas (Local Government Board) that this should be rather a matter for voluntary contribution than public expenditure from rates. Unfortunately, wealthy and benevolent people were few and far between, and had many calls upon them. In their anxiety to avoid coming before the public as spending bodies, the Guardians suggested throwing the expense on the County Councils. He only wished to add that he regretted that any remarks had been made reflecting upon the ladies, who had of late years taken an active and valuable part in Poor-Law work. This was a question of £ s. d., and it was no use for the Guardians to try to shift the burden on to other bodies. (Hear, hear.)

Mr SPEAR (Tavistock) said the question was really that of a national calamity, and it should be met out of the public purse and not by charity. He did not mind what authority took the work in hand, whether the County Councils or the Guardians. If the Local Government Board would take the initiative, the Guardians would readily respond to their call. He hoped that they would not rest until something was done. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs CHORLEY (Exeter) said that the children born in the Workhouses were generally the offspring of the feeble-minded. As to the question of the age, &c., to which control by the Guardians should extend, it ought to be twenty-one instead of sixteen years. She was surprised to hear any one say that tight stays were the cause of imbecility. Even doctors disagreed as to the cause, which some attributed to intemperance. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs ROYLANDS SMITH (Newton Abbott) said that to postpone reform for fear of raising the rates was a very cowardly way of looking at it. If the reforms which had been indicated that day were carried out, the country would benefit vastly in the future. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HARDING (Mere) suggested that one Workhouse in each county might be used as a special institution for the feeble-minded. There were Unions which were not nearly full, and it would obviate expenditure in building. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN said he spoke as a County Councillor. The County Council had been frequently referred to in the course of the discussion, and they knew from experience that there was a very great increase in lunacy, a real and apparent increase, but they all knew that the so-called increase in lunacy was not so much an increase in the number of lunatics as an increase in the number of lunatics in the County Asylums. They could recollect the time when in every village there was a certain number of lunatics and imbeciles roaming about, the object of insult and contumely, and often, when the angry passion was aroused by persecution, a danger to the public. Such a state of things now hardly existed, and therefore the recent increase of lunacy which had been the subject of so much discussion, was not an increase which need cause any serious alarm except from the point of view of the ratepayer. In one way it was a source of gratification that these people who were formerly so inefficiently cared for, were

now in well-ordered establishments, and that fact took one to the further and natural conclusion that as these people were so much more carefully tended, the death-rate amongst them had materially diminished, and was, in fact, exceedingly low, so that in that way, too, there was an increase in the number of lunatics. An ordinary agricultural labourer who came into our lunatic asylum found himself in conditions almost of luxury compared to what he had been used to, and his chance of life was greatly increased. They knew that the number of lunatics had not really increased, and that the statistics should not really alarm them, and yet that was saying very little, for there could be no doubt that there was a terrible amount of lunacy in the country, even if it was not actually increasing, and that the imbeciles, especially the children, whether epileptic or not, those on the border line between sanity and insanity, were amongst the greatest sufferers, because owing to the pressure on the County Asylums it was impossible to take children, and they were thrown back either into the Workhouse, where the machinery did not exist, so that they could not be properly cared for and could receive that education in early life which would enable them to earn their own living; or else they were thrown back upon their homes which were not proper places for them. The problem of dealing with them, whether through the Local Government Board, which meant the Government of the country, or the County Councils, or the Poor Law Authorities, seemed to present alternatives, but they were not really alternatives at all but only so-called alternatives, because in all the institutions at present open for the class under consideration the three bodies he had named played a part. The finances of every County Asylum fell into two great subdivisions, the maintenance account under the Guardians of the various Unions, and the building account, strictly and properly so-called, under the control of the county ratepayers. Both of those accounts, and the general government of the asylum itself, were liable to the inspection and control of the different Government Departments. At the present moment it was quite within the power of the County Councils to establish other asylums, if they chose to, for epileptic and imbecile children; but he was not at all sure that Guardians would not hear from the Local Government Board auditor if they, as Guardians, spent money in that way. Probably it would not be impossible for the County Councils to contribute to special institutions, such as that at Starcross. But whatever they did in that direction, they must bear in mind that the law would have to be strengthened to give additional powers of detention. It was no use training a child into a home, if within a short time a parent or guardian was enabled to take the child away whether the Guardians liked it or not. The continuity and extension of the system of training over a period of time was one great point. He had been an Industrial School manager in London for the last five-and-twenty years, and had found that the moment a boy was growing up and learning enough of a handicraft to earn a few shillings or a few pence, the managers were persecuted by persons who had some legal interest



in the child, and made the most persistent attempts to withdraw the child from the school. He knew a case where it was necessary to take the strongest measures against a parent who had behaved so badly to a child as practically to throw it on the rates but a short time before, but now wanted to withdraw it from school because it had made a little progress in bootmaking, and would have earned a few pence a week. Unless the law was strengthened, the parents might make difficulties. In this case they had to apply the old doctrine that the State was the parent and protector of the helpless, and extend that doctrine to the feeble-minded children. (Cheers.) The necessity for inquiry into the causes of lunacy he had repeatedly urged on the Asylums Committee of the county of Wiltshire, which held an unenviable position in regard to the number of insane persons. Let him remind them that the particular form of insanity termed imbecility was the growth not of the excitement of the great towns, but of the rural districts. There were the most extraordinary delusions on the subject. In the House of Commons the other evening he heard an Irish member assert that there would be an increase of insanity in Ireland if it became a manufacturing country. He was convinced that member was under an entire misapprehension about it. If they analysed the returns they would find an astounding proportion of imbecility in the country districts. In the county of Wilts the smallest proportion was around Swindon and Highworth, the largest about Calne and the rural district; and Dr Bowes, the skilled and able man at the head of the County Asylum, attributed it very largely to hereditary reasons, that in the present day they were still suffering in the rural districts from the evils which existed prior to the reform of the poor law in 1834, when in the southern counties there were masses of labourers living on the verge of starvation. Their descendants were suffering from the bad and insufficient food, the improper housing and so forth, and it was a remarkable fact that the particular Union in Wiltshire which now possessed the greatest number of lunatics was the one singled out by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 as possessing all the worst features which did so much to degrade the agricultural labourers of the country. There were some minor causes, and he was not at all certain from what he had been told by medical men that the system of sending very young children long distances to school might not be responsible for a certain amount of weak-mindedness. In Germany really compulsory education did not begin until a child was six years old. Forcing children of tender age to go a long way, and sit in a comparatively cold room, was a dangerous thing, and it would be better if they followed the example of Germany, the most advanced country in Europe, educationally, and insisted that if children were sent to school before their sixth year they should be kept strictly to the kinder-garten. Though drink was no doubt responsible for some insanity, if a man was badly housed and badly fed he lost self-respect, and insanity was quite as much mixed up with these conditions, the surroundings of the individual, as with drink. He felt that he might say that it would be the wish of the County



Councils to do what they could by combination with the Unions to combat the evils of insanity. The County Councils Association had a scheme for employing their own medical inspectors, so that patients might be kept in selected Workhouses which would be reserved for the purpose in each county. At present there was no power to do it, but the Association had every reason to think, from the manner in which the suggestion was taken at a recent deputation, that the matter would receive attention and would be dealt with in Parliament. (Cheers.)

Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE then left the meeting, having to be in his place in the House of Commons in the evening. The chair was taken by Mr A. H. A. HAMILTON.

A vote of thanks to his Lordship for presiding (proposed by Mr Heath, Newton Abbott, and seconded by several members) was carried by acclamation.

Mr MICHOLLS then replied on the discussion, saying that for epileptics private institutions were in most respects preferable, for the epileptic was not insane, and in the intervals between his fits he was as clear-headed as any one else, and exceedingly sensitive. However much they did for these classes, at best they only turned out half a citizen into the world; and if that person got on tolerably well, he or she probably married usually a person of about equal calibre, and the "half" and the "half" produced a "quarter." America was ahead of this country, inasmuch as it had legislation which prohibited the marriage of persons so afflicted. (Hear, hear.)

Mr SPEAR moved as an amendment to Mr Micholls' resolution—"That this Conference strongly recommends the Local Government Board to direct County Councils in conference with Boards of Guardians in each county to provide accommodation for the custody and training of imbecile children."

Mr PAIGE seconded.

The amendment was defeated by 18 votes to 15.

On being finally voted on, Mr Micholls' resolution was carried by 25 votes to 2.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Hamilton) said that his dear old friend, the late Earl of Devon, started the Starcross Asylum, and it had been a great success. If anything was done in this matter by the Guardians, it would only be by compulsion.

Mr CHANCE moved a vote of thanks to Mr Hamilton for taking the chair at the beginning and end of the Conference, saying that he hoped in future there would be an even more representative assembly, and that the various Boards would cheerfully defray the expenses of the delegates.

The vote of thanks having been carried with acclamation,

Mr HAMILTON, in reply, proposed a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers.

This having been seconded and carried unanimously,

Mr Clapp was enthusiastically accorded the thanks of the Conference for his valuable services, and the proceedings terminated.

## North Wales District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ANNUAL POOR LAW CONFERENCE FOR THE NORTH WALES DISTRICT, COMPRISING THE COUNTIES OF FLINT, DENBIGH, CARNARVON, ANGLESEY, MONTGOMERY, AND MERIONETH, HELD AT THE GEORGE HOTEL, BANGOR, ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, 22ND AND 23RD SEPTEMBER 1898.

MR HUGH THOMAS, *Chairman of Bangor and Beaumaris Board of Guardians*, PRESIDED.

The following Unions were represented at the Conference :—

### ANGLESEY—

M'Killop, A. (Chairman).  
Hughes, Lewis.  
Hughes, Thomas (Clerk).

### BALA—

*Nil.*

### BANGOR AND BEAUMARIS—

Thomas, Hugh (Chairman).  
Smith, W. Lester.  
Clegg, Harry.  
Edwards, Thomas.  
Jones, Mrs Ann M.  
Parry, Mrs Mary.  
Roberts, John, M.D.  
Lloyd, Mrs M. M.  
Lewis, W. Howard.  
Evans, R. Benjamin (Clerk).  
Jones, T. J. (Relieving Officer).  
Price, Dr Emyr Owen (Workhouse Medical Officer).  
Davies, William (Master).

### CARNARVON—

Williams, T. W. (Chairman).

### CONWAY—

Cotton, Mrs Annie M.

### CORWEN—

Jones, Dr D. R. (Chairman).  
Roberts, Mrs Susannah.  
Hughes, Thomas (Clerk).

### DOLGELLY—

Evans, John (Chairman).  
Mills, Richard.  
Williams, Charles.  
Evans, Hugh.

### FESTINIOG—

Jones, John (Chairman).  
Roberts, Thomas (Clerk).

### FORDEN—

*Nil.*

### HAWARDEN—

Fryer, William (Chairman).  
Jones, Maurice.  
Taylor, E. Sydney.  
Smith, Horace A. (Clerk).

## HOLYHEAD—

Roberts, Miss Annie.  
Hughes, James E. (Clerk).

## HOLYWELL—

Thomas, William (Chairman).  
Roberts, William.  
Prince, James.  
Petrie, John.  
Garner, Walter.  
Hughes, Miss M. M. E.  
Lloyd, W. H.  
Roberts, P. Harding (Clerk).  
Roberts, Arthur } (Relieving  
Jones, P. Smith } Officers).  
Edwards, J. Hughes }  
Hughes, Thomas (Master).  
Hughes, Miss (Matron).

## LLANFYLLIN—

Roberts, William (Chairman).  
Jehu, W. Alford.

## LLANRWST—

Williams, E. J. (Chairman).

## MACHYNLLETH—

*Nil.*

## NEWTOWN AND LLANIDLOES—

Bennett, Richard (Chairman).  
Hughes, Rev. T. H.

## PWLLHELI—

Jones, John T. (Chairman).

## RUTHIN—

Roberts, R. Humphreys (Clerk).

## ST ASAPH—

Williams, John.  
Roberts, Joseph.  
Grimley, Charles (Clerk).

## WREXHAM—

Boscawen, Capt. B. T. Griffith (Chairman).  
Cromar, George.  
Kyffyn, Morris.  
Bury, J. Oswell (Clerk).

## VISITORS.

Bircham, F. T., Poor Law Inspector, Chepstow.  
Rhodes, Dr J. M., Chorlton.  
Chance, W., Godalming, Surrey.  
Chance, Mrs, Godalming, Surrey.  
Bangor, His Worship the Mayor of (Mr Hugh Hughes).  
Boscawen, Mrs Griffith, Wrexham.  
Hughes, Miss M., Holywell.  
Lewis, Mrs Mary, Holyhead.  
Wake, Miss, Holyhead.  
Wake, Miss B., Holyhead.  
Roddam, Mrs Mary, Newport, Salop.  
Jones, R. T., Bethesda.  
Hinde, Miss Edith, Llandudno.  
Marshall, Mrs, Bangor.  
Adeane, Miss, Holyhead.

Watkins, Mrs Elizabeth, Pwllheli.  
Grafton, Miss, Heysham Hall, Lancaster.  
Edwards, Mrs, Bangor.  
Penrhyn, Lady, Bangor.  
Pennant, Hon. V. Douglas, Bangor.  
Kyffin, Mrs, Bangor.  
Jones, R. Rowland, Bangor.  
Evans, Miss A. B., St Asaph.  
Williams, Miss K. J., Llanfair P.G.  
M'Killop, Miss C. H., Llanerchymedd.  
Lewis, Miss Lois P., Bangor.  
Evans, Archdeacon, St Asaph.  
Jones, Miss Wynne, Bangor.  
Williams, Mrs A. Ll., Holyhead.  
Paynter, J. Wynne, Amlwch.  
Roberts, W. H., Holywell.

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## THURSDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER.

The MAYOR OF BANGOR (Mr Hugh Hughes) welcomed the members to Bangor. He said it gave him great pleasure to be there that day in response to the suggestion of his friend, the worthy Chairman of the Bangor and Beaumaris Board of Guardians, whom he was pleased to see presiding over the Conference. He welcomed the members most heartily in the name of the City Council of Bangor. He could not remember having attended any previous Poor Law Conference, although he had been a Poor Law Guardian himself for a period of twenty years without a break, and all that time he had been associated with the Chairman, and was glad to say that they had worked together most harmoniously, considering the interests of the poor, and at the same time not forgetting the interests of the ratepayers. He was glad to say that they always carefully considered the Annual Report of the Conferences, and that sooner or later they acted on the resolutions. He warmly welcomed the Conference to Bangor. (Cheers.)

Captain GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Wrexham) said he had been asked to propose a vote of thanks to His Worship the Mayor for extending a welcome to the members. It was a very great honour to the Conference to be welcomed by the Mayor in the name of the City Council. They were very much indebted to the Mayor for coming. It was exceedingly difficult to decide where these Annual Conferences should be held so as to be convenient to all parties. Last year they were at Llangollen, this year they were meeting in a very enjoyable and beautiful place, and he was glad to see such a large attendance and so many ladies. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JOHN EVANS (Dolgelly) seconded.

The CHAIRMAN wished to add his thanks to the Mayor for coming and giving them that hearty welcome. He had had considerable association with the Chairman in Poor Law matters for many years. The Mayor was always an assiduous worker, and if he erred at all it was in favour of the poor.

The vote of thanks having been carried,

The MAYOR thanked the meeting, and said he was very pleased to see so many ladies present, and he greatly appreciated the valuable work of ladies in the administration of the Poor Law. (Hear, hear.)

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS (Hon. Sec. of the Conference and Clerk of the Holywell Union) read letters of apology for absence from Mr Murray Browne (Local Government Board), who was prevented by official work from being present; Mr Lester Smith (of Halkyn); Mr Lloyd Griffith (Vrondy, Holyhead); Mr James Parry (Wrexham), &c. &c.

Mr HARDING ROBERTS also stated that he had been requested to draw the attention of the Conference to a resolution passed by the Somerset Poor Law and Rural District Association, on 7th February.

1898, recommending that tramps should receive a dole of bread and cheese for their mid-day meal in order to remove all excuse for begging. The consideration of this question was deferred.

The CHAIRMAN said it gave him great pleasure to be there that day and to occupy that position. It was a long time since a Poor Law Conference was held in Bangor—if his memory was accurate, about eighteen years. [Captain GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN—1880.] They then had the advantage of the presence of Mr Barwick Baker (one of the founders of these Conferences), who read a paper. In looking round he regretted to find that there were very few of those who attended the 1880 Conference present that day. He did not know the reason, unless it was the operation of the Local Government Act, 1894, in regard to *ex-officio* members. In his own Union they had had considerable loss by reason of that Act, for the *ex-officio* members were among the most valuable. He was pleased to see so many ladies present, and he hoped they would have an interesting and beneficial Conference. Through the efforts of their indefatigable Honorary Secretary, Mr Harding Roberts—(hear, hear)—they had secured the services of three persons to read papers—one of them a lady Guardian; another Mr Chance, the Honorary Secretary of the Central Poor Law Conference; and the other Dr Milson Rhodes, who was not a stranger amongst them, for they had had valuable papers from him on previous occasions. (Hear, hear.) It would not be desirable for him to anticipate those papers in any way, but he would like to allude to one important Act of Parliament which was passed in the last session, the Vaccination Act, which relieved Guardians of a great burden of responsibility in regard to putting the compulsory clauses into operation, because parents might now appear before Justices and obtain a certificate of exemption from vaccination. There had been already many applications, invariably successful, but in one case he noticed that the magistrate argued the matter with the applicant, and pointed out the dangers of non vaccination. That applicant thereupon went away to consider the matter further, and whether the application had been renewed he (the Chairman) did not know. In his own Union they had had no difficulty in putting the compulsory clauses into operation. Their Union was divided into four relief districts—two in the Anglesey district and two in the Carnarvon portion of the Union. The periodical returns on one occasion showed that there were forty-eight unvaccinated children in the Union. The Board adjourned the matter for a month, and then found that all the children had been vaccinated in that interval. The unvaccinated in the district were only one in each district. He was reading last week the statistics relating to vaccination in the Halifax Union during a period of five years. He found that there were 23,107 births, and that the number vaccinated was 1,567; there died in infancy 2,790; so that 18,750 persons remained unvaccinated in the period in question. He understood that if they took the returns for the last fourteen years in Halifax they would find that there



were from twenty-five to thirty thousand persons unvaccinated in Halifax alone. He did not think things were so bad as that in North Wales. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE then read the following paper :—

## INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RELIEF, WITH SPECIAL RELATION TO CHILDREN.

By W. CHANCE, Esq.,

*Hon. Secretary Central Poor Law Conference.*

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THE English Poor Law has two main objects, the relief of destitution and the prevention of pauperism.

It was long ago recognised by the Central Poor Law Authority that the best chance of obtaining the latter object lay in giving the children who were thrown upon the Poor Law for support such an education as might give them a good start in the world, and not the least of the advantages of the establishment of Workhouses was that it enabled this to be done.

It is easy, nowadays, to find fault with our Poor Law system in its dealing with children—its critics being apt to forget that its administrators were the pioneers of national education—but the success of the system in its depauperising influence cannot be gainsaid. If you turn to the figures given on page 322 of the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, you will find that while the average daily number of paupers in the year ended Lady Day 1849 was 1,088,659 (62.7 per 1,000 of estimated population), the corresponding number for the year ended Lady Day 1897 was 814,887 (26.5 per 1,000 of estimated population). It would, of course, be going too far to attribute the whole of this decrease to an improved administration of Poor Relief, following upon the reform of 1834, but that this improved administration is the main cause can be easily proved by the instances of particular Unions. Although this is not the question before us to-day, it may be of interest and an encour-



agement to the Guardians of North Wales to know what a very satisfactory decrease of pauperism has taken place in their Unions since 1871—a year, however, when pauperism stood very high in the District, as indeed it did over the whole country.

On the 1st January 1871, 28,481 persons (excluding lunatics and vagrants) were being relieved in the North Wales Division\* of Union Counties (19 Unions), while on the 1st January 1898 the number had been reduced to 15,605, that is, by 45.2 per cent. Not the least satisfactory part of the decrease was in the amount of child-pauperism, from 9,412 to 4,450, a decrease of 52.7 per cent. And it is well to note, by the way, that while outdoor pauperism decreased during the 27 years from 29,634 to 14,166, indoor pauperism decreased at the same time from 1,547 to 1,439. These figures are so satisfactory that you might think a sermon was quite uncalled for. Unfortunately, the proportion of pauperism to population is still considerably higher in North Wales than in England and Wales taken as a whole. You have 380 paupers to every 10,000 of population, while the whole of England and Wales has only 304. These latter figures include lunatics and vagrants, but if these two classes of paupers be excluded, the difference is much the same, 347 paupers to every 10,000 of population in North Wales to 266 in the whole of England and Wales.

I do not think, therefore, that the Guardians of North Wales ought to rest satisfied until they have brought the pauperism of their district down to the level of that of the whole of the country.

Now here comes in the importance of your turning your special attention to the question of the children. You cannot do much to wean adults from pauperism, but you can do a great deal with the children. Are

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\* The figures exclude the Hawarden Union, which is *officially* included in the North-Western Division of Counties. In that Union, on the 1st January 1872, 507 persons were being relieved (excluding lunatics and vagrants), while on the 1st January 1893 the number was 371 only.

you adopting the best means to make them independent? Do you, when an application is made to your Boards for relief, always consider the effect which the way that application is dealt with may have on the children of the applicant?

In the Half-yearly Returns to Parliament of Pauperism—known as the “B” Returns—the numbers of children relieved in England and Wales on the 1st January and the 1st July in every year are given. Thus we find that on the 1st January 1898 (excluding lunatics and vagrants) 52,505 children were classed as indoor paupers and 173,147 as outdoor paupers.

Those in receipt of indoor relief included—

Illegitimate children of inmates	-	-	6,357
Orphans or other children relieved without their parents	-	-	33,288
Children of able-bodied inmates	-	-	9,764
Children of not able-bodied inmates	-	-	3,096
Total	-	-	52,505

Those in receipt of outdoor relief included—

Children resident with their able-bodied fathers who had obtained relief	-	-	26,522
Children dependent on widows	-	-	103,783
Illegitimate children with their mothers	-	-	445
Children relieved on account of parents being in gaol	-	-	3,243
Children of soldiers, sailors, and marines	-	-	179
Children of other non-resident males *	-	-	8,088
Children of parents who were not able-bodied	-	-	20,689
Orphans or other children relieved without parents	-	-	10,198
Total	-	-	173,147

There is one figure in the above Table which attracts attention at once. It is that which gives the number of children who were receiving outdoor relief on account of the widowhood of their mothers. You will see that these children form 60 per cent. of the total number of outdoor pauper children. From

\* These children would be mostly of the class called “deserted children.”

statistics which have been kindly supplied to me by the Clerks of some of the Boards of Guardians in the North Wales District you will see that the proportion is much the same in this district.

Union.	Number of Children receiving Outdoor Relief (including Boarded-out Children) on 25th March 1898.			Percentage of Children of Widows to Total Number of Children.
	Children of Widows.	Other Children.	Total.	
Llanfyllin - - -	65	75	140	46
Forden - - - -	46	19	65	71
Newtown and Llanidloes -	118	90	208	57
Ruthin - - - -	49	17	66	74
St Asaph - - - -	133	105	238	55
Conway - - - -	114	117	231	50
Anglesey - - - -	102	58	160	64
Bala - - - - -	18	42	60	30
Pwllheli - - - -	127	87	214	60
Wrexham - - - -	238	308	546	44
Holywell - - - -	290	206	496	59
Corwen - - - - -	106	23	129	82
Llanrwst - - - -	61	26	87	70
Bangor and Beaumaris -	275	86	361	76

Now are all these children of widows really being reared to become self-dependent when they grow up?

I am aware of the difficulties under which you labour in North Wales. Suppose, for instance, you were to offer, when a widow applies for relief, to relieve her of the burden of one or more of her children so as to set her free to gain an independent livelihood, what could you do with these children? You could scarcely board them out under a foster parent living in the same Union, you might not like to take them into the Workhouse, and you have (except at Wrexham) no separate establishments to send them to. And yet the evils which specially attach to giving outdoor relief to widows may be so great that I want you to consider whether you would not be doing wisely, either separately or conjointly with other Unions, to



establish institutions where you could see that these children had that good training and education which is so specially necessary for them, along with other children who could then be sent there. I venture to say that there would be little danger of children brought up in a well-managed establishment becoming at any time a burden to the rates in after-life, and I would throw out a suggestion as to what kind of establishment might be advisable for the smaller Unions. But first of all I should like to show how the evils which attach to the outdoor relief system generally may affect the children in the homes into which the relief goes.

In the first place, I think the Relieving Officers will tell you that on the weekly pay-day it is not uncommon for the children of those on the outdoor relief lists to come for the money and loaves which are then distributed. Surely, if this is so, it cannot be a good thing for the children. I shall be glad to hear that it is not the practice in North Wales, although it would seem almost impossible to prevent it, unless the Relieving Officers distributed the weekly loaves and money at the various homes of the paupers. But in Unions where there are many outdoor paupers, the Guardians have to arrange for pay stations, and fixed hours for giving away the relief, or otherwise their Relieving Officers would have no time to attend to their other important duties, and even if these officers could find time to distribute the relief at each home, can you suppose for a moment that the children would not be sharp enough to know where the relief came from. And is it a good thing for them to become familiarised with the Relieving Officer?

Unless, however, I can give you some concrete examples of the evil effects of outdoor relief upon the children, you will perhaps scarcely admit that they exist otherwise than in my imagination. I am enabled to do this through the kindness of a lady Guardian

who has been brought face to face with them in her work.

The Union which this lady represents has a population of about 40,000, and a great deal of outdoor relief is given in it, to the amount of nearly £4,000 a year. Her instances are drawn from the cases of widows only, but as these are the most difficult cases to contend with by those who, like myself, advocate an "indoor relief" policy, and as they form the very large majority of those on the outdoor relief list, I am content to deal with them alone, feeling sure that if I can only persuade you to tackle them seriously, a reduction in the numbers of other families on the list will soon follow.

In the chief town in the Union a Charity Organisation Society is established, the members of which do their best, but as yet with not much result, to induce the Guardians to guard their outdoor relief lists more carefully than is the case at present.

The first case is that of an army sergeant quartered in the town, who died leaving a widow with five little children, all of school age, and all delicate. My correspondent describes it as follows:—"The case was referred to the Charity Organisation Society, with a view to its being, if possible, kept off the rates, as the family was highly respectable. After nine months of effort on the part of the Charity Organisation Committee, this case has found its way on to the outdoor relief list. No time, pains, or money were spared; but the fatal knowledge that outdoor relief was to be had for the asking made all our efforts unavailing. I have little hesitation in saying that had this been an 'Indoor Union' or a Union in which outdoor relief is given on fixed principles, this family would now be self-supporting. It is almost hopeless to expect a widow to try her hardest, and to respond to efforts made on her behalf, when the parish dole is dangling before her eyes. The

Charity Organisation Society started the woman with washing apparatus, they obtained for her an excellent connection in the washing line, they got an experienced laundress to teach her, one of the boys was got into the Duke of York's School, another very delicate lad was sent for months to a children's hospital for hip disease. But the woman would not work. She lost all her washing, although I am bound to say her employers were most long-suffering and patient. The neighbours told her in so many words that she was a fool to work when she could get outdoor relief, and the Committee were forced to drop the case. If the Guardians had then offered the House and had sent the children to school all might still have been well. But no, 1s. and a loaf all round was given. What is the result? The children are half-starved, and the home most miserable. The poor little things are bound to grow up weakly men and women, and will no doubt become a burden on the community in some form or other."

The second case relates to a widow with five children. My correspondent continues, "This case varies from the other, as the woman was a most struggling, hard-working, but very weakly woman. I have no doubt that had the Charity Organisation Society been in existence when she first became a widow we could have saved the family from coming on the rates, at all events we should have had a good try. The usual allowance (as foolish as it is cruel) was made of 1s. and a loaf for each child. The children were growing fast, and wanted good food. This of course the mother was quite unable to provide, and the poor things have grown up into miserable specimens of humanity. They too are bound to become a charge upon the community in later life (and not so very late either!). One girl has very bad eyes, owing, the oculists tell us, in a great measure to poor living. Surely, if some of the children had been sent to school,



leaving the widow two to bring up, it would have been a far better way of treating the case. There were, too, relations who would, it is thought, have come forward and taken the children if indoor relief had been offered."

In the third case, "the husband died without making any provision for the family, leaving a widow and four or five children. She at once applied for outdoor relief, and was granted the usual allowance for the children. The woman was somewhat weakly, both in mind and body, distinctly what one would call a poor creature, and rather deaf. She had two boys, the elder children of the family, who at once began to get out of hand. They were boys who wanted a firm hand over them, and there was really no one to control them. The clergyman of the parish, who took an interest in the family, came to the Charity Organisation Society and asked if we could send away the eldest and most troublesome boy 'to be licked into shape.' I suppose it was contrary to sound Charity Organisation Society practice, and that we really did the Guardians' work for them; but as the Board at that time never sent children to any kind of institution, our Committee stretched a point and consented to try to save the boy. We therefore sent him to the Church Farm Home near Barnet, an excellent place, where we had sent a boy who had done remarkably well. The young monkey behaved so badly that the Church Farm Managers sent him back at the end of a fortnight, and said he ought to go to a Poor Law School where there was strict discipline. The Guardians did not take this advice, and then he and his younger brothers kindly undertook the complete management of their mother's house, and a very nice domestic scene it became. She, poor soul, was at her wit's end to know what to do with the boys, and the young scamps completely tyrannised over their poor weak mother. I have seen my young lords sitting with their feet on

the hobs of the kitchen grate smoking cigarettes and indulging in the choicest flowers of rhetoric, at the ages of 13 and 14. A good-natured lawyer actually tried one of them as an office boy, but he stole money in a particularly disgraceful way, and spent it at football matches. Of course he was dismissed, but unfortunately he was not prosecuted. These boys were had up many times before the magistrates for doing mischief, pilfering, &c. Now, if instead of giving outdoor relief the Guardians had sent the boys to school, it is surely very probable that they would have turned out decent members of society. No doubt they would have been troublesome, but the unaccustomed tonic of a caning would have done wonders for them, and they would, no doubt, have settled down. They were high-spirited boys who wanted a strong man's hand over them, instead of being left under the care of a singularly weak and foolish woman."

The same lady who has supplied me with the particulars of the above cases, and who has devoted many years of her life to work among the poor, not only as a Guardian but in other ways, and who consequently speaks with great authority on the subject, ends up her letter to me by saying :—"Of all systems (and that which seems to me to be absolutely fatal both to the material welfare and character of children) the plan of allowing widows with four or five children outdoor relief is the worst. There are of course many other objections to it which you will no doubt bring out, but the effects on the physical well-being of the children are not often mentioned."

Well, I am afraid it is beyond the scope of my paper to point out other objections, but perhaps I may be allowed to refer you to the evidence on the subject which I adduce in my little book, entitled "The Better Administration of the Poor Law," and especially to the remarks of Mr (now Sir Henry) Longley in his most able (and what ought to be well known) Report

on Poor Law Administration in 1874, which is printed *in extenso* in the Appendix to the Fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, but which I believe has been since published separately. I would, however, suggest that you should ask yourselves this question—"How is it possible for a widow to bring up her children on the very inadequate allowance which is commonly given?" When you board out a child you pay from 4s. to 5s. a week for its maintenance, education, doctoring, and clothing. As outdoor relief is given to a widow on account of her children, you are really boarding them out at home, and why should she be worse dealt with than a foster mother? I know you dare not make the weekly dole adequate, you would have to raise your outdoor relief scales all round, and the expense would be so great that the ratepayers would have a just cause for complaint. I can see no other solution of the question than that you should absolutely refuse outdoor relief to widows, except in suitable cases, for a limited time after the death of the husband.

You may reply to me that it is impossible to adopt this course. I not only say that it is possible, but I can refer you to Unions where it has shown itself to be possible. Take the Atcham Union, Shropshire, which includes the town of Shrewsbury, and has a population of 48,346 (Census 1891), a larger population than any Union in the North Wales District, except Wrexham. On the 1st January last 88 children were receiving relief. Only five of them were receiving outdoor relief, and these five were children of widows. This seems to me to show that it is the "widows" who now stand in the way of our pauperism being reduced. It is also material to mention that on the same date 500 paupers (excluding lunatics and vagrants) were receiving relief in that Union (369 indoor and 131 outdoor), or 10.3 paupers per 1,000 of population. The corresponding figures at the same date for the two Unions with the



least pauperism per head of population in North Wales were 21.9 in Forden and 23.9 in Wrexham. No other Union in this district had a pauperism of less than 28 per 1,000 of population, while the Union with the highest *per mille* of pauperism to population (Holywell) had 45.1. The Bradfield Union (Berkshire) tells us the same story. On the 1st January 1898, 37 children were receiving relief in a population (1891) of 18,017, but in this Union there were at that date no children in receipt of outdoor relief, and its *per mille* of total pauperism to population (excluding lunatics and vagrants) was only 7.6. In both these Unions it has been the practice of the Guardians, for a long time, to relieve destitute widows by taking charge of some of their children, though in some cases outdoor relief has been given for a short time to enable the widow to turn round and see what she can do, but the relief is seldom or never continued after that time.

All good mothers are naturally loath to part with their children, even when they know that it is really for the good of the latter. This feeling pervades all classes from the richest to the poorest, but all mothers have to submit to it at one time or another, and who can say that the Guardians are acting cruelly to the widow in giving her child a good schooling and education. I have practised myself what I am now preaching, and I remember one case of a widow with children applying for relief when I induced my Board to offer to take two of her boys in the school. The widow protested, but seeing that the Board were firm in their resolution, finally gave in. Some time afterwards I happened to be calling at the house of the mother-in-law, and she took the opportunity to volunteer the following remark—"I want to thank you, sir, for what you have done for me!" I replied that I was quite ignorant of having done anything for her, but she said, "Don't you remember those two boys you got into the school? They are doing so well, and

their health is so much improved, and they are so happy." I said that it was the last thing that I expected thanks for, because I had been rather abused for what was considered my harsh action at the time, and I was naturally very much gratified. "Oh yes," she said, "the boys are getting on well, and the mother is out washing regularly in a laundry, and earning good wages." Now those boys were very difficult boys to manage, they were bad attendants at school, and their mother could never have looked after them properly while working for her living at the same time. They were bound to become ne'er-do-wells, but I hope they will be saved from this by the discipline of the school.

At the time these two boys were sent to the Union Schools they were seven and ten years old, and I wrote recently to a lady Guardian, who takes a great interest in the schools, to ask after them. Here is her reply :—" I was at the schools to-day (18th July 1898), and heard all about Mrs —— (the mother), who had just written to ask to have her boys for a holiday. They are now 13 and 10 years old, very small, but such nice bright little fellows. The mother is living at ——, and every now and then calls to see them." You need never have any fear of a good mother deserting her children in a case such as this.

If, then, you should think of turning your serious attention to the question of restricting outdoor relief more generally than you do at present, you must make provision for the children which that policy may throw on to your hands. Now I think it is generally admitted that the Workhouse is not a suitable place for either the education or the maintenance of children, although to my mind it is infinitely preferable to the wretched home life which many of them have. Where, however, the school is separated from the Workhouse, and under entirely separate superintendence, the system works admirably, as will probably be

testified to by the representatives from the Wrexham Union. But is it necessary that the buildings where the children are maintained and housed should be in near proximity to the Workhouse? Experience gives an answer in the negative. I want to bring to your notice a system which was adopted about twelve years ago in a County Union in Kent—the Elham Union. This is a Union in which outdoor relief is given pretty freely. It had a population of 40,928 in 1891, and was relieving on the 1st January last, 956 persons (317 indoor and 639 outdoor). The Union, which includes the town of Folkestone, covers 43,690 acres, so that the population is a fairly scattered one. Its *per mille* of pauperism to population was 23.3. Of 220 children who were classed as outdoor paupers on that date, 171 were children of widows, so you can see that the policy of the Board rather inclines to favour outdoor relief to widows with children. In July last the number of children of widows in the Homes was 11.

The Homes, which are at Cheriton, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Sandgate Station of the South-Eastern Railway and about 3 miles from the Workhouse, now consist of three cottages and a laundry. With the playing fields and garden they occupy a little over two acres of ground. One of the cottages, containing 33 beds, is for boys over seven, and the other two, of 26 and 18 beds respectively, are for girls and infants of both sexes under seven. The boys' cottage is under the supervision of the Superintendent and Matron, and the other two are under the charge of two women who act as "mothers." In addition to these four paid officers there is a needle mistress, and a paid woman comes in two days every week and does the heavy washing. But the female officers with their girls are responsible for the hanging out of the clothes, folding, ironing, repairing, mangling, &c. There are two playgrounds divided by a wall, one for the boys and the other for



the girls and infants. The children do similar work in the cottages to what an ordinary village child would do in its own home. The training is principally of a domestic character, and each "mother" acts as an industrial trainer to the children under her care. Some of the elder boys work in the garden and laundry, and the elder girls learn washing. The children attend the outside elementary schools, which are within easy distance, and I think the Guardians pay sixpence per week for each child. As the system was established previously to the passing of the Free Education Act, the Guardians had to pay for their children, and the payment has been continued since, though at a reduced rate. The children go to school by themselves, an elder child being put in charge of them as monitor, and they walk in an orderly manner to the school, two and two, and return in the same way. The boys play cricket and football matches with other clubs. Sometimes the children have picnics in the summer, and they go out for walks over the hills and fields, and enter into what games they like. Relations are allowed to visit the children on the first Saturday in every month. The health of the children has always been excellent, there having been only one death in nine years. The "after care" of the children when they leave the Homes is managed principally by the Superintendent and Matron. The Girls' Friendly Society looks after the girls, and the Relieving Officer also visits. The Guardians are supposed to visit the Homes once every week. Almost all the children do well after they leave the Homes. Of 15 girls and 38 boys who have left for service or employment between 1889 and 1897, one girl has turned out badly (but she was a hopeless girl from the first, and with gipsy blood in her), one girl and one boy are described as not satisfactory, while two girls and one boy have been lost sight of. I think you will consider these by no means bad results. I am told that the Guardians do not have

much difficulty with children leaving their first situations, and they do everything they can to prevent them coming back to the Workhouse between situations, but if they are under 16 they can be received back into the Homes. "Ins and outs" do not trouble the Homes much, and I think that question mostly affects large towns. If a child is ill, it is sent to the Union Infirmary. Before a child is sent to the Homes it is kept for 14 days in the Workhouse for purposes of probation. I should add that the Homes are entirely separate from the Workhouse, all requisites for the Homes being supplied on contract, and coming direct from the contractor to the Homes.

Now I think you will like to know something about the cost of the Homes. I am indebted for the information to Mr Loneragan, the Clerk to the Elham Board of Guardians, and to Mr Harvey, the Superintendent of the Cheriton Homes.

## ANNUAL COST OF THE ELHAM HOMES.

(Return dated 14th May 1896.)

Interest on and repayment of loans, &c.	£321	1	2			
Average repairs of building	-	-	42	12	0	
Insurance of buildings	-	-	3	12	0	
						£367 5 2
Average repairs and renewals of furniture, &c.						35 0 0
Rates	-	-	-	-	-	33 0 0
Salaries of officers *	-	-	-	£227	12	6
Rations of officers	-	-	-	135	16	7
						363 9 1
School fees of children	-	-	-	-	-	29 10 3
						£828 4 6
Less Parliamentary Grant for industrial trainer	-	-	£50	0	0	
Less Parliamentary Grant for school fees	-	-	29	10	3	
						79 10 3
						£748 14 3

\* Includes part of salary of Clerk to Board of Guardians, viz., £24. 12s. 6d.

	Per Child per Week.
The annual cost as above, which includes everything except maintenance and clothing, is equal to - -	s. d. 4 1½
Maintenance and clothing during the year ended at Lady Day 1896, cost - - - - -	4 1½
	<hr/> 8 3

The average number of children in the Homes was then taken at 70. At the present time the number of children in them is 68. Of course as years go on the loans will be wiped off, and a large saving in the cost of the Homes effected.

Under this system, then, at a comparatively small cost, Guardians may feel assured that they are securing the future of the children—that they will be practically depauperised.

But while I should like to see the principle of indoor relief more extensively applied to the children of widows, either by the above system which I have described, or by any other system which might best suit the conditions of each Union, I am glad to think other classes of children have benefited during the last thirty years by the more careful administration of outdoor relief.

Take the case of illegitimate children. I think we shall all agree that it is absolutely necessary to refuse outdoor relief to the mothers on their account. It is a sad thing to find that so many as 445 of these children in England and Wales were classed as outdoor paupers on the 1st January last, but it is very satisfactory to note the large decrease in their numbers from 8,013 in 1849 to 2,992 in 1871, and to 445 in 1898, showing that these outdoor pauper children are now one-eighteenth of what they were in 1849, and one-seventh of what they were in 1871. I think in North Wales you should look carefully into the subject, for from the returns of ten of your Unions which have reached me, there are still 29 of these children on the outdoor relief lists.



We now come to children who have to be relieved under the Poor Law on account of their helpless state, either as orphans or as deserted children, or as being afflicted with certain infirmities of mind and body.

As to "orphan and deserted" children, I believe the Guardians of North Wales use their powers of boarding them out extensively. I do not wish to say one word against this system, which will work well if Guardians are careful to select good homes, to choose kind foster parents who are not entirely influenced by the money consideration, only to board out suitable children, and to exercise a constant and careful supervision of them.

For the latter purpose I would recommend a special Boarding-out Committee, under the Boarding-out Within Unions Order, and I would specially impress upon you how important it is that the services of ladies should be utilised in the matter. It would require a separate paper to go fully into the subject of "Boarding-out." I have tried to point out the advantages and disadvantages of it in a recently published book, "Children under the Poor Law" (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.), the chapter which deals with the subject being largely based upon the valuable Annual Reports of Miss Mason, the Senior Inspector of Boarding-out. But one thing I must say. Please rid your minds of the idea that by boarding-out a child you are thereby getting rid of what is called, and in my opinion cruelly and shamefully called, the "pauper taint," or that you are securing its future any more certainly than by other systems. Everything depends upon good administration, and "boarding-out" will fail equally with other systems if it be not most carefully supervised by those who are constituted the legal guardians of the children.

Among the children who may come under the control of Boards of Guardians from physical or mental disabilities, I would instance the blind, the deaf and

dumb, the cripples, the epileptics, the imbeciles or idiots, and the feeble-minded.

For the treatment of the two former classes a sufficient number of institutions probably exist, and Boards of Guardians will be doing wisely to make use of them for proper cases. This is a form of outdoor relief which will have the sympathy of all, although it is, in fact, practically indoor relief. Guardians are apt to complain of the present expense, but what they should ask themselves is, "Is it not better to spend a little more now for the sake of making these children self-supporting in the future than to grudge the extra expenditure, and so render them liable to become chargeable to the rates so long as they may live?" For we must never forget that the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the cripple can almost always be made self-supporting if they are taken in hand when sufficiently young, and put in a position to receive the special education and training which their unfortunate condition renders necessary.

The case of the mentally affected children has only come prominently to the fore in recent years, and at the present time is a subject which is greatly interesting Boards of Guardians. There are very few sane epileptic children in our Workhouses (insane epileptic children can be dealt with in lunatic asylums); and when enough special Homes are provided, either by the Education Department or by voluntary effort such as the National Society for the Employment of Epileptics is now establishing, for those epileptic children who, although capable of benefiting by education, are unfit by reason of epilepsy to attend the ordinary schools, Guardians will no doubt make use of such Homes, and we shall no longer find these afflicted children in any of our Workhouses.

As to the treatment of those children who cannot exactly be called imbeciles, but whose mental state is such that they cannot properly be taught in ordinary

elementary schools by ordinary methods, and for whom special classes in such schools is necessary, the question is one more for the Education than the Poor Law Authorities to take up. Still I must bring to your notice the fact that Voluntary Homes are rapidly springing up all over the country for the special benefit of this class of children, and I am sure that Guardians will be willing to incur the comparatively small extra expense of sending this class of children to these special Homes, where they can be mentally and morally improved, so as to render them independent and self-supporting instead of their becoming a permanent burden to the rates for the whole of their lives. The National Association for the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded—whose head office is at 49 Victoria Street, S.W.—will gladly give information to any Board of Guardians who may have a difficulty in dealing with their feeble-minded children.

Lastly, we have the imbecile children, who form a considerable proportion of children in Workhouses. Every one is, I think, agreed that they should be entirely separated both from the insane on the one hand, and from the sane on the other. It is as cruel to send them to lunatic asylums as it is to keep them in Workhouses. The provision of suitable institutions for these is probably beyond charitable effort, as their numbers are so large, although the successful institution at Starcross, which was started in this way, shows what voluntary effort can do when it tries. The County Councils seem to me, however, to be the proper authorities to tackle the question, either by combination or singly, owing to the number of children for whom separate institutional provision ought to be made. Probably for the whole of Wales one or two institutions would suffice.

From what I have said you will gather that I hold a strong opinion that the usual arguments in favour of the restriction of outdoor relief to its narrowest limits



apply at least equally to the case of the child as to the adult. In considering applications for outdoor relief Boards of Guardians should not forget the children in the homes into which the relief goes. It seems to me that the first question they should ask themselves is, "Are we likely, if we grant outdoor relief in this case, to benefit or injure the children?" If the home is untidy, and if the children are neglected or attend school irregularly, outdoor relief should be refused, and the same course should be adopted in the case of a widow where it is evident that she cannot properly look after the children. You must also bear in mind that the refusal of outdoor relief to this class of persons often brings out of their seclusion relations or friends to help the widow in her distress, and so prevents the creation of a pauper family. These parties will never make their appearance if the relief be given.

I am aware that the views which I have expressed are not "popular" at the present time, but they are supported by history and experience, and I am perfectly certain that it will not be long before the working classes—who have now the power to determine the policy of Boards of Guardians—will have to acknowledge that the greatest enemy to their progress is the increasing burden on the rates which the extension of outdoor relief implies.

I must not close my paper without throwing out a suggestion that Boards of Guardians might make more use than they do at present of Training Homes established under the Certified Schools Act, 1862. No doubt it is a very laudable desire on their part to get their indoor pauper children into service or employment as soon as possible, but it seems to me that after they have spent so much money upon the children, they might spend yet a little more so that the children may be sent away capable of earning wages at once. In the case of girls especially a training for domestic service before they enter upon it is most desirable. I

am certain that such an extra expenditure would be economical in the long run, because the future of a girl would be thus absolutely secured. I am given to understand that an excellent certified Training Home is in existence at Holyhead, where Poor Law girls are received and so trained that they are able to earn good wages directly they leave the Home, and which possibly the Guardians of North Wales might be willing to make more use of if its work was better known to them.

It is one more of the advantages of *indoor* relief as applied to children that the Guardians can see that a child leaves them fully equipped for the battle of life ; and when they have secured further powers of control over the children, which are so much wanted to protect the latter against worthless and vicious relations and false friends, they will have no excuse for not seeing to it. This leads me to refer, in conclusion, to the Bill which was introduced into Parliament last session giving Guardians further powers of control over children who become chargeable to the rates. We had a good discussion on the subject at the last Central Poor Law Conference, which showed how unanimous was the feeling of the Conference in favour of securing these increased powers of detention, and I need not extend my already too long paper by going into the subject again. All I would say is this, that I wish that the same Bill would place it in the power of Guardians, in the case of "ins and outs" and of vagrants, to detain the parents of these children as well, and set them to hard work. I think the knowledge that such a power existed might make these gentry a little more shy than they are at present of using the Workhouses as Hotels. I confess that I am very doubtful of the policy of taking children away from this class of persons without in some way punishing the parents for causing these children to become a charge on the rates.

## DISCUSSION.

Mr OSWALD BURY (Clerk of the Wrexham Union) said he was very glad to welcome Mr Chance as a missionary from headquarters. His paper amounted to a caution to the Guardians of North Wales as to the administration of out-relief and as to the treatment of the children. Mr Chance said he desired to draw special attention to the feeble-minded. It had been thought necessary to legislate for the compulsory education of deaf and dumb children, but nothing had been done for the feeble-minded, who were allowed to grow up in hopelessness and helplessness. They were sent to the ordinary schools, to their own detriment, and that of ordinary pupils. Guardians should use their best endeavours to get defective children into Special Homes. They had two such boys in the Wrexham Union, who were sent to an ordinary school, but the teachers could make nothing of them. At last, thanks to some kind ladies and gentlemen, the two boys were brought under the notice of the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded (49 Victoria Street, Westminster), an institution which had done splendid work, although only in its infancy. The elder boy was too old; the younger one was sent to Braintree, where the boy had made remarkable improvement both in his habits and disposition. The great thing to be remembered was, that by proper treatment they could make the feeble-minded capable of earning their own living. In properly equipped institutions like that at Braintree the patients were under the care of specialists. The cost of the school had been certified by the Local Government Board, and Guardians were authorised to send cases there at an expense of about £18. 4s. per annum, and the children received such careful treatment and excellent bringing up there, that he was only too anxious to impress upon the Guardians the desirability of sending children to it. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs CASSON (Festiniog) said Guardians ought to exercise the greatest care in dealing with applications for outdoor relief by widows. They must remember that though a woman might be dirty and thriftless, yet it might be better for the children to remain with her than to be herded together in an institution. Nothing could compensate for the loss of a mother's loving care, and institution life had a very bad effect on the character. If a widow was not cleanly, and did not send her children to school, the Guardians could surely effect an improvement by threatening to stop the relief. At the same time, she thought Mr Chance's suggestion a good one, that the children should be taken away from the mothers at ten or twelve years of age and sent to Training Homes, to fit the girls for service, and the boys for the sea or some other calling. There was one other point, as to stopping relief if there were illegitimate children, it was a premium on child murder. But where a woman had illegitimate children she should certainly not be entrusted with their bringing up. (Hear, hear.)



# APPENDIX.

CLASSIFIED RETURN of the Number of Children in Receipt of Relief on the 25th day of March 1898, from particulars kindly supplied to Mr Chance by the Clerks of the Boards of Guardians in the North Wales Poor Law Conferences District.

supplied to Mr Chance by the Clerks of the Board of

UNIONS.	Number of Children Relieved.	Indoor.	Outdoor.	PARTICULARS OF INDOOR CHILDREN.										In Lunatic Asylum.	PARTICULARS OF OUTDOOR CHILDREN.						
				Going to School outside Workhouse.		In Workhouse School.		In Workhouse.							Children of Widows.	Illegitimate Children.	Children Boarded Out.		Other Children.		
				"Ins and Outs."	Permanents.	"Ins and Outs."	Permanents.	Not of Age to go to School.	Imbeciles.	Feeble-minded.	Epileptics.	Vagrants.	In Infirmary.				Orphans.	Deserted.			
1. Machynleth - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
2. Newtown and Llanidloes -	231	23	208	...	11	...	...	7	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	118	9	31	17	33
3. Forden - - -	86	21	65	...	17	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	46	2	2	2	13
4. Llanfyllin - - -	165	25	140	2	14	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	65	...	7	...	68
5. Holywell - - -	518	22	496	13	1	...	...	4	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	290	1	37	6	162
6. Wrexham - - -	622	76	546	...	...	34	30	11	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	238	1	10	5	292
7. Ruthin - - -	87	21	66	...	8	...	...	12	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	49	...	3	...	14
8. St Asaph - - -	286	48	238	...	30	...	...	16	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	133	2	14	2	87
9. Llanrwst - - -	92	5	87	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	61	1	3	...	22
10. Corwen - - -	150	21	129	...	18	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	106	...	7	...	16
11. Bala - - -	64	4	60	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	18	3	4	3	32
12. Dolgelly - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
13. Festiniog - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
14. Pwllheli - - -	229	15	214	...	8	...	...	6	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	127	10	30	4	43
15. Carnarvon - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
16. Bangor and Beaumaris -	376	15	361	3	2	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	275	1	12	11	62
17. Conway - - -	284	53	231	...	42	...	...	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	114	...	6	...	111
18. Anglesey - - -	178	18	160	...	17	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	102	3	...	...	55
19. Holyhead - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20. Hawarden - - -	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No reply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

... 1808

CORRESPONDING FIGURES for the Atcham Union and the Bradfield (Berks) Union, but for the 1st January 1898.

Atcham - - - - -	90	81	9	31*	26	12	...	11†	...	3	7	2	5	...	...	4	...
Bradfield - - - - -	37	37	...	7	25	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

\* Girls only. Mr Everest, the Clerk, says:—"The girls go out to Atcham National School. It has not improved them, in my opinion." Boys are still in the school, and are more successful when they are sent out to employment than the girls, "in my opinion, owing to discipline, moral training, and thorough supervision."

† These 11 feeble-minded children are included in the 69 indoor children enumerated in the previous columns.



Dr JONES (Corwen) said they were deeply indebted to Mr Chance for the paper. He cordially agreed with Mrs Casson that where the mother was, there should the child be, for there was none equal to a mother to take care of a child. With reference to institutions such as that suggested in the paper, the expense would be the greatest obstacle. He represented a poor parish, and he knew that there were many rate-paying people who had to live less comfortably than those who were in receipt of outdoor relief. While they should do what was necessary, they should be very careful not to spend a penny of the ratepayers' money needlessly. They had hardly a case in his own Union that would be suitable for treatment in the kind of institution Mr Chance indicated, and they had also no difficulty about getting children to attend school regularly. (Hear, hear.)

Dr RHODES (Chorlton, Lancashire), who was cheered on rising, said he desired to point out that there was a credit side to spending money on education as well as a debit side. (Hear, hear.) Fifty years ago England was the most pauperised country in Europe. From that time they had been spending money on education, and just as education had spread (and there was an easy means of finding that out—the number of persons marrying who had not been able to write their names), so pauperism had declined. If they spent money on education, it was much better to spend it so than on prisons and policemen. Unless the public spent money on education, how could people know where to find the best market for their labour, and how could they become skilled artisans? Money spent on education was a good investment. As to truant schools, they had good ones in Lancashire, and by a timely detention of three or four months they had, doubtless, saved some boys from years in the reformatory. Another question was raised, that of sending the children out of the Workhouse two by two. Let the children go to school like any other children, and if they did get a few black eyes and coloured noses it would only teach them to fight the battle of life. Let them do all they could to make the children grow up good and useful members of society. The question of the feeble-minded required a great deal of attention. He believed that this country was behindhand, and that the institutions “made in Germany” were better than the institutions at present existing in England. Last year, with his friend Mr Alderman M'Dougall, of the Manchester Board, he visited Germany, and inspected the various institutions for the feeble-minded. If they wanted to see first-class State institutions for the epileptic, they must go to Wuhlgarten, near Berlin, where there was a thoroughly good institution, well equipped for the work, and he hoped to see such an institution at Chorlton in the near future. To put children into a lunatic asylum was a terrible mistake, and a great injustice. Now, every year they were taking larger areas of ground for their asylums. Last week he was at Edinburgh, and found that a site of about seven hundred acres had been acquired for an asylum, to accommodate from a thousand to



fifteen hundred patients. There would be plenty of room for all sorts of cases. If they were to grade the cases properly there must be a good many children together. He would not say that he would not put an asylum for children in connection with a general asylum. It was working well in Germany. As for places like Chalfont St Peter, they might put them out of their consideration altogether. It was a very small place, and might have been put up for two-thirds of what it actually cost; moreover, the State could do this kind of work much better than private enterprise. In reply to Mr Chance, Dr Rhodes said he did not necessarily mean that the County Councils should be the body entrusted with the work. As to the suggestion that there should be Training Homes for children about to go out into the world, he thought that, while Training Homes were capital things, it would be better to place the children in homes which were as nearly as possible furnished like ordinary houses, so that they might get to know something about ordinary utensils, and the ordinary routine of domestic life. Lastly, as to what the feeble-minded could do. He did not think that it was reasonable to expect them to earn their own livelihood entirely, but they could be trained to get a great deal of it. At the Craig Colony in New York they were actually earning 75 per cent. of the cost of their maintenance, and that was a consideration which would appeal to the most economical Guardian when deciding whether these Homes should be started. If Guardians would only get rid of the little petty jealousies which had prevailed in the past, and would combine to deal with this question, it would be vastly beneficial not only to the feeble-minded but also to the ratepayers. (Cheers.)

Mr JONES (Pwllheli) said there were difficulties, chiefly financial, in the way of combination. If the Unions in North Wales or in one or two counties would combine it would be a good thing, but there must be provision against any Union subsequently withdrawing itself from the scheme, or great difficulties would result. As to ordinary children, he quite agreed with Mrs Casson that a mother was the natural protector of her children, but if the mother was addicted to drink or immorality the children should be taken from her. (Hear, hear.)

Miss ANN ROBERTS (Holyhead) agreed that the mother was the best guardian of the children provided that she did not drink, and that she was well disposed towards the children and capable of looking after them. She mentioned cases in her experience where the mothers had not been suitable custodians.

Mr WILLIAM THOMAS (Holywell) said that while glad to hear so much about the children who were living outside the Workhouse, he thought that the Guardians' first care should be of the children of whom they were the foster parents, the illegitimate and orphan children in the Workhouses. They had in his Union an average of forty children in the House, and they were ordered to make other provision for them by the Local Government Board, but just then

they were thinking of boarding out the children, and they did so, and the result was very satisfactory. Mr Bircham visited every house and saw all the children, and his remark upon his return was, "Can you find me forty such homes for forty other children?" (Hear, hear.) Out of the forty or more children they had had only one complained of during the two years or so that the system had been in operation. The children were brought up quite free from the pauper taint. He knew several of the children, and the homes they were in, and that they were just like other children. They mixed with other children and were treated just like the foster parents' own children. The feeling of his Board was by all means adopt the boarding-out system as opportunity serves. (Hear, hear.)

Captain GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Wrexham) said he wished to call the discussion back to the subject of the paper. Probably Mr Chance was much struck by the large amount given in North Wales in out-relief. He (the speaker) considered that the Welsh people were second to none in character, intelligence, and industry. Mr Chance turned his attention to the question of the granting of out-relief to widows, and pointed out how undesirable it was to grant such relief to widows. He quite agreed with him, and he also felt that it was a hardship to separate mothers from their children, and thought that it must not be done when the children were very young. (Hear, hear.) But they must satisfy themselves that the children were kept properly, and were sent regularly to school. He thought it was advisable that at a certain age the children should be taken from their mothers and sent to proper institutions. There were cases where the mere fact that out-relief could be obtained very easily deterred women from seeking or accepting work. Care must be taken that widows who were recipients of out-relief did not relapse into indolence. So far he went entirely with Mr Chance. If special institutions were established for the children they could be taken from their mothers, and the women would then be forced to earn their own livelihood. At one of the Central Poor Law Conferences he heard of a case where a widow was offered very good employment and declined it because she was in receipt of out-relief. There could not be a stronger proof of what the loose administration of out-relief would lead to. If the Guardians would carefully sift their relief list they would be able to remove very many names. (Hear, hear.) He did not agree with the expression "pauper taint"—he did not believe in it. They gave a little more out-relief at Wrexham than they used to, and there was room for improvement in this respect all over North Wales. A great deal of harm was done by the false idea that if they gave out-relief they saved the expense of maintaining persons in the House, but statistics showed that where there was least out-relief there were also fewest paupers in the House. If Guardians made up their minds to be not stern and cruel but judicious in this respect, there might be a slight increase in the number of persons in the House, but it would not necessarily follow. The paper was a very thoughtful one. As to the



boarding-out system, it had been tried in Wrexham, and he believed in it, but it must be carried out with the greatest care. They must be very careful as to where they placed the children. At Wrexham there were some mistakes made at first, and children got into undesirable quarters. If good homes could be found with unselfish foster parents, who did not look solely to the money, the system might be worked with advantage, but it was only the orphans and deserted children who could be boarded out.

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS (Hon. Sec.) said he was glad that one of the Relieving Officers of his Union was present at the Conference, as he might be able to give his experience of the working of the boarding-out system in the Union, where it had been very satisfactorily carried out. He would like to join in the tribute of thanks to Mr Chance for his valuable paper. He did so with the greatest pleasure, knowing the readiness with which Mr Chance consented to give the Conference the benefit of his great experience in Poor Law matters. The excellence of the paper had fully justified his anticipation of it. (Hear, hear.) The practice of allowing children to be sent to the pay-stations to receive the out-relief for their parents should be stopped. It made the children regard out-relief as a part of their existence, and prevented them from seeing that there was anything derogatory to themselves in applying for it in after-life. He knew of an instance in his own Union where the only reason that a woman could adduce in support of her application for relief was that her grandmother and mother had had it before her. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) He hoped that Guardians would make a strict resolution not to allow children to be sent for the relief. Those who received the relief should apply for it personally. Reference had been made in the paper to the unfortunate position in which Holywell stood in regard to out-relief. Every case was taken into careful consideration, but there had been a combination of adverse circumstances ; they had lost a number of industries, and the only Union that could at all bear comparison with them was Wrexham. Mr Chance was a little in advance of the times, but he thought that the general tendency of the Holywell Board was on the whole in the direction of the principles advocated in Mr Chance's paper. (Hear, hear.) Mrs Casson seemed to think that children should never be taken away from their mothers, but he was not at all sure that some mothers should not be deprived of the privilege of bringing up their children. In many cases the chief objection to parting with the children was aversion to a Poor Law school, but the children were most willingly sent to other institutions. The children should have the opportunity of growing up as respectable citizens, and should not be regarded as being separated from home. They should be allowed to go home for the usual holidays. He hoped to hear something of the experiences of the Relieving Officer. He thought that Guardians should be vested with greater powers for dealing with the "Ins-and-Outs." Many Boards had passed resolutions on the point. It was a



subject which required special legislation at once, and the Local Government Board ought to be pressed to grant increased powers. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JONES (Festiniog) said he would be glad to hear how it was suggested that widows should be dealt with in the matter of relief.

Rev. T. H. HUGHES (Newtown) said that his Board had for some years adopted the boarding-out system with the best possible results. The Committee consisted of one lady who took an active interest in the matter, and received the reports regularly of the various houses where the children were boarded out. Mr Chance had indicated an excellent way of dealing with the children in the future, and he thought that one result would be a diminution of pauperism in the future. (Hear, hear.)

Miss EVANS (A Visitor) said that in many of the smaller Workhouses it was felt that they could not afford to board out the children because of the room that was left empty, and the boys and girls were sent out to work as soon as possible. The Guardians lost a great opportunity of educating those children, even if they were only going to work on farms. At St Asaph the boys and girls were specially trained for a year and a half before being sent to situations. Previously the children were not able to get as good wages as other children, for they had not had a home-life and the opportunity of learning household and other duties like ordinary children. The girls should be taught housework, and the boys how to do gardening and to saddle and harness a horse, and they might also, perhaps, be taught mat-making. She heard of a case where a farmer said it took him a fortnight to teach a boy how to harness a pony. Unless they got good wages they could not save, and then they were at the mercy of those who got hold of them, and eventually they must come on the rates again. As to taking children from their parents, where the mother was unfit, the sooner the children were taken from her the better. (Hear, hear.) In one case where a boy was very unruly the Guardians threatened to stop the mother's out-relief unless she allowed the boy to be detained in the Workhouse for a few weeks. She consented, and the consequence was that there was no more trouble with that boy, or indeed with other children in the district. (Hear, hear.)

Miss GRAFTON (Lancaster) said that for the benefit of those Guardians who might be inclined to send children to a Special Training Home shortly before sending them to service, she might state that in the list of about seven hundred such institutions published by the Local Government Board it appeared that the cost per head per week varied from five shillings to seven shillings and sixpence. Six months or a year's training was an admirable thing. Except in the large Unions they could not give them proper instruction in cookery and domestic routine. The training given in the Special Homes fitted the children for getting higher wages, and being more independent and likely to give some return for all the care and trouble taken with them. (Hear, hear.)

Miss WYNNE JONES (Bangor) said there were two Church Homes where Boards of Guardians had first refusal at a weekly payment of only three shillings and sixpence; one was for children under seven years of age.

Mr JONES (Dolgelly) said they had adopted the boarding-out system with great success.

Mr WILLIAMS (Carnarvon) said that the children in the Workhouse were sent to the public elementary schools, and wore ordinary clothes, not a uniform. A stranger would not know they were from the Workhouse. Since attending the town schools the children had greatly improved in their education, and there were numerous applications for the children as soon as they were able to go out to work. (Hear, hear.) He was happy to be able to bear testimony to the efficiency of the Training Homes. As to the relief of widows, the number in Carnarvon was very large, and after recent inquiries the Board had come to the conclusion that many young widows were receiving out-relief who ought not to have it. Widows seemed to make it a rule to come on the rates whether they were needy or not. Most of the widows in his Union were respectable women whom it would be very wrong to deprive of the custody of their children. (In reply to the President, Mr Williams stated that he could not say whether any names had been removed from the relief list as a result of the inquiries he mentioned.)

Mr ARTHUR ROBERTS (Holywell) said that in that Union they followed a strict rule—never to allow children to be sent for the relief money. With regard to boarding out, it had this great advantage, that when necessary the child could usually return to its foster parents until another situation was found, and that was a great help to secure the future of the child. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (St Asaph) asked whether any one could decide what woman was not fit to be entrusted with her children. Could not a mother defy the Guardians and refuse to part with her children?

Mr LEWIS HUGHES (Anglesey) said there seemed to him to be the usual attendance at that Conference of gentlemen like Mr Chance and Mr Bircham, who tried to graft town institutions on the country life of North Wales. He himself felt far from being so pessimistic as they were about the old systems. In his Union they had sometimes forty or more, and sometimes only twenty-five or thirty inmates, but the standing cost of the Workhouse was the same in either case. If they sent the children and the weak-minded away, what would become of the Workhouse? They had only “about a dozen and a half of children” in the Workhouse, and they could not start a special institution for that number. However, there was something to be said for boarding out. It was impossible to graft London or Birmingham or Chorlton life on the country districts of North Wales. As to the apparently excessive amount of out-relief, there was as strong an aversion to the Workhouse in North Wales as there was to



the gaol, and they had only the residue of the aged and infirm to deal with, and they would not be herded with the tramps and the demented. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE, replying on the discussion, said he had not written his paper from the point of view of London or any other large centre, but simply of the special needs of North Wales. There were extraordinary differences in the amount of pauperism. The Guardians of North Wales, no doubt, did their best to administer relief properly, but they might effect an improvement by going more carefully through the lists, and he was glad to be supported in that opinion by the statement of the Guardian from Carnarvon. He felt as strongly as any one that where a woman was a good mother she should not be separated from her children; but if there were not more than two children there was no reason why she should become a pauper at all. At any rate, relief to young widows should always be for short periods, and every effort should be made to prevent it becoming continuous. (Hear, hear.) But once they gave out relief it was very difficult to stop it, so it should be strictly limited, in the first place, to six months, and then discontinued. In cases where widows were left with four or five children, it would be a good plan for the Guardians to take two or three of them and support them until the mother could maintain them, or they were of an age to go to work. The Guardians should make careful inquiries in all cases to try to get hold of any relatives who might be called upon to contribute to the support of applicants for relief. He wished to thank them all, and especially Mr Harding Roberts, and he might perhaps be allowed to remark that his coming there that day was not so difficult a matter as it might seem, as he was cycling through Wales. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JOHN EVANS moved, and Mr Cromar (Wrexham) seconded, the re-election of the three representatives at the Central Poor Law Conference, viz. :—Captain Griffith Boscawen (Wrexham), Mr Hugh Thomas (Bangor), and Mr Harding Roberts (Bogwell).

This was carried unanimously.

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS made a statement of the accounts of the Conference. This was considered very satisfactory, and approved by the meeting.

Captain GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN asked whether it would not be advisable to hold the Conference in alternate years in future.

It was resolved, by a practically unanimous vote, to hold the Conference annually in future, and to devote two days to it as heretofore.

On the question where the Conference should be held next year there was a show of hands, with the following result:—Chester received 2 votes; Rhyl, 7 votes; Dolgelly, 8 votes; and Wrexham, 16 votes.

It was decided that the Conference should be held at Wrexham, and that the arrangements should be left in the hands of a Committee, consisting of the Chairman of each Board of Guardians.



Captain BOSCAWEN proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Chance for his admirable paper.

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS seconded, saying it gave him great pleasure to repeat his acknowledgments to Mr Chance for coming to the Conference.

The vote of thanks having been carried with acclamations, Mr CHANCE briefly thanked the members, and the Conference was adjourned.

In the evening a dinner was given at the Hotel, and an informal discussion on Poor Law matters took place. Mrs Grafton, of Heysham Hall, Lancaster, gave an interesting account of the work of the Girls' Friendly Society.

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### FRIDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER.

The PRESIDENT read a telegram from Mr Humphreys Owen, M.P., "Greatly regret, unavoidably prevented from attending the Conference. Best wishes."

Dr RHODES then read the following paper:—

## COMBINATION AMONG UNIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF IMBECILES AND EPILEPTICS.

BY JNO. MILSON RHODES, Esq., M.D., C.C.,

*Chairman of the Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylum Committee.*

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THE opening and the closing years of the nineteenth century appear to be alike characterised by an awakening of the public conscience to the necessity that exists for improving the treatment of the unfortunate people that come under our care suffering from mental disease. Unsatisfactory as we are bound to acknowledge the condition of things to be, yet it is pleasant to think that enormous progress has been made since that terrible "Report from the Committee of the House of Commons on Madhouses in England" was issued eighty-three years ago.

If the old superstition that the mentally afflicted were possessed by devils had been correct, the treatment could hardly have been more cruel. The rational treatment advocated by the ancient Greek and Egyptian philosophers had been entirely forgotten, or at least ignored, and the system throughout the length and breadth of the land was no better than that described by Shakspeare as "the darkhouse and the whip."

It would not be right to take up your time with many proofs of this statement, but I shall venture to quote two out of many examples, and these two are by no means the worst. At York Asylum, 13 women were confined in a room 12 feet by 7 feet 10 inches. In the cells where they slept the so-called beds consisted of straw, by no means fresh, spread on the stone floor; many of the patients were chained and handcuffed, and some of them were not released from Saturday night to Monday morning.

At Bethlehem, better known as Bedlam Hospital, the dormitories were unglazed, and no fires or any form of heating apparatus provided for the unfortunate inmates. Four keepers were supposed to be enough to look after 120 patients, many of them acute cases of mania. The authorities certainly took steps to prevent them being physically very violent long after admission, for they were "physicked, bled, bathed, and vomited at least twice a year." Medicines were given in May, June, July, August, and September,—not in the winter season because the house is so excessively cold that it is not thought proper (*A.*).

From beginning to end the Report of that Commission is a tale of horrors, too dreadful, and in many cases too indecent, to relate in public, but the benefits that resulted to the unfortunate insane who had been the victims of ignorance, cruelty, and greed were innumerable; and though happily such horrors as I have just referred to are no longer allowed to exist, yet in

my opinion the time has come for us to insist upon another Commission being appointed to inquire into the causes, the effects of which we see in the ever rising tide of lunacy that throws a hundred thousand of our fellow-citizens under the care of the State.

#### NECESSITY FOR BETTER CLASSIFICATION.

In the excellent address on psychology delivered by that distinguished alienist, Dr Tuke, at the meeting of the British Medical Association last month, there is a paragraph that might have been written for us.

Speaking of the fact that in all the first-class institutions for the treatment of the insane, not only in England but abroad also, separate hospitals are provided for recent and acute cases, he said, "This to my mind illustrates how widely diffused the change of feeling in regard to the insanities has become extended.

"But even with such appliances, many of those working amongst the insane are heavily handicapped, as no provision is made by the public for the treatment of cases in the initial stages.

"Statistics show that the increase of chronic lunatics occurs amongst the poorer classes of society, and not amongst the rich.

"We know that if we exclude general paralysis, epileptic insanity, and certain congenital classes of insanity from consideration, at least 80 per cent. of recent cases are amenable to treatment. But such treatment is necessarily costly, as it involves nursing and continuous medical attendance. This is out of the power of the poor to obtain. All general hospitals shut their doors against persons suspected of insanity, on the ground that the asylum is the proper place for their treatment. The asylums, however, cannot receive cases until the symptoms are so far advanced as to warrant certification; and in England especially, the procedure for the transmission of insane persons to



asylums is so absurdly cumbrous, as to prevent many persons being placed under treatment until such time as the probabilities of their recovery are seriously lessened, or the case hopeless" (*B.*).

I do not imagine there is a single alienist who will not agree with Dr Tuke. But it is not in that capacity, but as Guardians of the poor, that we have to consider this question; but looking at the extract I have just quoted, in that light it appears to me to furnish enough debateable matter for a whole day's discussion, as to how much money we are wasting by the penny wise and pound foolish policy of each Union, however small, keeping its own imbeciles and epileptics. Having had the honour of being commissioned, with my friend Mr Alderman M'Dougall, J.P., of the Manchester Board, to visit and report upon all the Asylums of Europe that we thought worthy of inspection, I may say that we found in all the best asylums this separation of the acute and chronic cases (*C.*). This, as you know, is not the case in the insane wards even of the very large Workhouses; and we know only too well that however good our intentions are, so long as we delay combining with our neighbours for the treatment of this class of cases, so long will it be impossible for us to provide even an elementary system of classification. Any one who will glance over the following list of lunatics in the Workhouse wards of North Wales will be of my opinion (*D.*).

LUNATICS, INSANE PERSONS, AND IDIOTS, IN THE WORKHOUSES  
OF NORTH WALES.

County.	Union.	Male.	Female.	Chil- dren.	Total.	Total of County.	Grand Total.
Anglesey	Anglesey -	1	1	0	2	18	
	Holyhead -	8	8	0	16		
Carnarvon	Pwllheli -	2	14	0	16	41	
	Carnarvon -	2	6	0	8		
	Bangor and Beaumaris -	4	5	0	9		
	Conway -	4	4	0	8		
Denbigh	Wrexham -	23	28	0	51	81	
	Ruthin -	4	2	0	6		
	St Asaph -	5	16	0	21	25	
	Llanrwst -	1	2	0	3		
Flint	Holywell -	5	20	0	25	33	
Merioneth	Corwen -	2	2	0	4		
	Baln -	1	3	0	4		
	Dolgelly -	0	7	0	7		
	Festiniog -	9	9	0	18	36	234
Montgomery	Machynlleth -	1	4	0	5		
	Newtown and Llanidloes -	3	2	0	5		
	Forden -	8	7	0	15		
	Llanfyllin -	5	6	0	11		

From the above table, it appears that there are only three Unions in North Wales having twenty or more lunatics in their imbecile wards, viz., Wrexham, St Asaph's, and Holywell. No less than eleven of the Unions in North Wales have less than ten insane cases under their care. In half a dozen Unions the number does not exceed five.

As I said just now, where the numbers are so small any proper system of classification is impossible, and yet it is to those Workhouse wards that many of the acute cases of insanity are first sent. At the very time that there is the best chance of recovery if the patient is afforded proper treatment, he is placed under the worst possible institutional conditions—anything more

mentally depressing than constant and compulsory association with incurable imbeciles it is impossible to imagine.

### THE RAPID INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CHRONIC LUNATICS.

Dr Tuke's statement that the increase of chronic lunatics occurs amongst the poor and not amongst the rich, is amply borne out by the statistics. It is the weakest breaking down in the struggle for existence.

. . . . .  
The restless heart and fevered brain  
Unquiet and unstable,  
. . . . .

Life's changes vex, its discords stun,  
Its glaring sunshine blindeth ;  
And blest is he who on his way  
A fount of healing findeth (*E.*).

That fount of healing will not be found in our crowded Workhouse wards. Only last month, at a Cheshire Workhouse, the medical officer reported that six imbecile women had to be in the body of the House as there was no room for them in the proper ward. With such improper treatment as this, no wonder the number of chronic lunatics increases by leaps and bounds.

At present there is no uniform system of treating the insane who come under the care of the Guardians. To demonstrate how unjust the present condition of affairs is to some of the Unions, I must, even at the risk of wearying you, inflict more statistics upon you.

Taking the average of all England and Wales, the average percentage works out as follows :—

In Asylums	-	74.59 per cent.	.
In Workhouses	-	18.96	„
With Relatives, &c.		6.45	„

That is for the kingdom, but when you come to



the counties you find a very different state of affairs, as the three following examples prove :—

County.	In Asylums.	In Workhouses.	With Relatives.
Cardigan - -	48.8	11.1	40.1
Hants - -	90.0	8.7	1.3
Middlesex - -	93.2	3.5	3.3

In North Wales the number of cases sent to the Asylums for treatment is very much under the average, the reverse being the case as regards those residing with relatives.

#### PERCENTAGE OF LUNATICS IN

County.	Asylums.	Workhouses.	With Relatives.
Anglesey - -	55.2	13.6	31.2
Carnarvon - -	55.9	14.6	29.5
Denbigh - -	55.8	24.8	19.4
Flint - -	60.6	16.3	23.1
Monmouth - -	59.8	27.3	12.9
Montgomery - -	71.	14.7	14.3

It will be at once seen that the last on the list is the only Welsh county that approaches the average for Asylum treatment. The percentages in Workhouses range from 13 to 27. Considerable as this range is, that of the class residing “with relatives” is much greater, being in no case less than three, and in some cases four times as great as the average.

Now I must say that I am very doubtful if there is any wisdom in keeping persons of unsound mind, certificated or not, at home. It is a very grave question, if it is wise to have lunatics residing in the same house where children are. The effect upon them certainly cannot be beneficial, and the keeping of the insane at home among the poorer classes is very doubtful, even on economic grounds. In every house where a lunatic forms one of the inmates, some person must be permanently at home to look after the imbecile, so reducing in many cases the earning power of the family. In the case of young females, every Guardian knows what numerous dangers are associated with the allowance of unrestricted liberty to the mentally

deficient of all classes. Only last month I came across the report of a large Workhouse where there were 24 weak-minded women (*G.*). This number does not include those simply morally weak. Seven of these women had been the mothers of 16 children, all burdens on the rates, and who of course will no doubt in time swell the ranks of our imbecile pauper population. One imbecile woman had had four children—two are imbecile, and a third died of consumption. Another case I find referred to in a report was very similar to that of an imbecile girl in our own Workhouse, I refer to a girl who had six children, four of them living, all idiotic, and who will continue all their lives to be burdens upon the State which neglected to make proper provision for their mothers (*H.*). So great an authority as Dr Fletcher Beach, speaking of the neglect of this class at present existing, said, at present “not only do the girls, as they reach maturity, lead immoral lives, but many of them, as well as the males, swell the ranks of the criminal population of all classes of degenerates. None transmit their infirmities in a greater degree than the imbecile.”

Some time ago the National Vigilance Society made inquiries, and found that, at 56 Workhouses no less than 366 women of this feeble-minded class had passed through their wards, the result of leading an immoral life.

The Commissioners in Lunacy are very outspoken as to the necessity that exists for prompt and adequate action being taken. “They have been painfully impressed by the obvious want of suitable provision for an extensive and necessitous class of persons; they are not the subject of such a degree of mental unsoundness as in the opinion of the Medical Officers renders them certifiable in the present state of the law, and they are therefore unable to be detained against their will, although they are not sufficiently of sound mind to be able to take adequate care of themselves” (*C.*).

“Permanent sequestration is the most efficient and humane manner of reducing the feeble-minded. One writer states that 27 per cent. would thus be cut off.”

### THE EPILEPTIC CLASS.

So much for the imbecile side of my subject, and much more could be said did time and the Chairman permit. The rest of my time must be devoted to pleading the interests of a class that has been more neglected than any other, viz., the epileptic. What the number of epileptics in England is we cannot with our imperfect statistics at present say with absolute certainty.

It is to be hoped that we shall follow the good example of America in our next census, and have a return as to the defective classes far more complete than any we have yet had. If we take France, which has almost the same number of insane as we have, as a guide to the number of epileptics, we find that there the ratio is 9.2 per 10,000,—that would mean that we have about 30,000 epileptics in England, and of these it is estimated that about one-third would be better in institutions (*I.*).

American writers assert that their statistics show that the number of epileptics approaches that of the insane. “It is not an isolated condition, it is a widespread disorder, finding its victims among all peoples, and in all walks and conditions of life. The great mass of them are wanderers and encumberers, swelling the ranks of the pauper and criminal classes, transmitting their infirmities to their progeny, thereby increasing financial burdens, both to the State and its citizens, as well as being a constant menace to the peace and safety of society. Nature seems to place her seal of doom upon the epileptic and his progeny; on one member as an habitual criminal, another as an imbecile, and a third a consumptive, while the fourth may be an epileptic. (*K.*). Lombrosa was able in his



work on abnormal man to show that a large number of epileptics have led degenerate, often criminal lives, and my inquiries have convinced me that had we looked better after our epileptics we should have had fewer criminals. I agree with Dr Powell, that of all hereditary factors, except feeble-mindedness, none is so prolific in entailing a blight upon succeeding generations as epilepsy. For these reasons I earnestly coincide with the opinion of those who are seeking to establish separate institutions or colonies for them. I do not think the public fully realise the necessity that exists for dealing with the epileptics in a more enlightened and in a more liberal spirit.

“Just try and realise the present position of the epileptic as a child. Many of the public schools refuse them on account of their attacks frightening other children. When the time comes for them to seek employment things are worse, specially in the case of females. Not only are they handicapped by their want of education, but no one will employ them as nurses on account of allowing children to fall; nor as cooks, for fear of them falling into the fire; shops are closed to them on account of their fits frightening the customers; even the ordinary hospitals refuse to receive them, for fear of their fits disturbing the other cases. Truly, as Dr Giraud said, at the International Congress at Antwerp, misery is their heritage (*L.*); and it is no wonder that a considerable number end their days in suicide, others mentally degenerating in their compulsory idleness constitute 10 per cent. of the insane in our asylums, where they are the most hopeless class of all our cases; a considerable number of the female cases finding all honest means of gaining a livelihood impossible, find their way to the street, and thence to our lying-in and lock wards.”

The writer I have just quoted claimed, and rightly claimed, for the young epileptics, that they should have the power to obtain such hospital treatment and

such education as may render them, as far as possible, useful members of society, and not leave them without an effort to prevent them becoming permanent burdens upon the State. For the adult epileptics he asks State aid, so that their complaint shall not be made worse by the mental anxiety that many of them undergo in their terrible struggle for existence,—in other words, that the same measure of help afforded to the insane should be extended to the epileptics. I cordially agree with him, but how?

By combination. I am certain that in the future we shall see far more combination among Boards of Guardians for the treatment of the defective classes than we have in the past. What is there to prevent a joint-committee of the twenty Boards in North Wales providing a special colony for epileptics? If one asylum for idiots does for the seven northern counties of England, why should there not be one institution for North Wales? At the present moment, I see from the lunacy returns that five Welsh counties send their cases to one asylum; surely the whole might combine, the expenses to be a common charge upon the authorities. I am glad to be able to say that in advocating this course, I am only preaching the doctrine that the Chorlton and Manchester Boards are practising; they have set an example, by being the first Boards to resolve to provide separate accommodation for the epileptic on the colony system. I am quite aware that some of our friends are of opinion that the whole of this class can be dealt with by voluntary effort. There is ample room for voluntary effort, especially in the poorer middle classes, and it will take voluntary effort all its time to meet the necessities of their case; but even to suggest, as one gentleman did, that voluntary effort is sufficient, is absurd, and not worth wasting our time discussing.

Now, what is the colony system? To put it briefly it is simply the cottage home system, applied

to the treatment of epileptics and imbeciles. There is a small one in England, at Chalfont St Peter, but it is so small, and the buildings so unnecessarily expensive, that we can leave it out of the question; and for the the best models we have, I am sorry to say, to accept the asylum "made in Germany." Bielefeld is known to everybody, and deserves all the credit it receives, as having been the pioneer in teaching the public their duty in regard to this unfortunate class. But here the State has certainly altogether distanced the voluntary institution, and for the class with which we have to deal, Wuhlgarten, near Berlin, is much better adapted to serve as a model.

"In the colony part of the establishment, there are twelve houses for men and the same number for women, with from twenty to thirty-eight patients in each house. It must be borne in mind that in all the houses three sitting rooms are provided, besides a 'fit room' for cases during an attack, and the patients are therefore able to voluntarily carry still further the system of classification which is so great an advantage of this system. No dormitory in the establishment provides for more than ten patients, many of them considerably less. There are no high-walled courts in the whole establishment. The boundaries consist of ordinary two-strand wire fencing, and the effect is, as you will easily understand, different to that of the prison-like courts with which we are too familiar in workhouses" (*L.*).

They certainly do their very best to employ the patients, specially on the farm, which appeared to be in excellent condition, and upon which a considerable number of the epileptics are employed, both male and female. Carpentering, tailoring, shoemaking, straw rope plaiting, bookbinding, basket-making, and field work. As far as possible the productions of the patients are used to meet the requirements of the asylum.



America is rapidly adopting the colony system in dealing with its epileptics, and a few extracts from their reports may be interesting (*M.*).

Craig Colony, in Livingstone County, was opened February 1896. A year ago they had admitted more than 250 patients; and have now perfected its equipment, so far as administration is concerned, for 750 patients; and they ask for an additional grant of \$200,000, on the following grounds:—

“The feasibility and economy of the colonisation of epileptics has been demonstrated beyond question, and now the time has come when suitable homes should be provided for the great numbers of dependent epileptics yet remaining as public charges and in dependent families throughout the State.

“It requires no fine sense of reasoning to understand that it is a matter of economy to take dependent epileptics from County Houses (Poorhouses), where special provision for their care and treatment cannot be made, and place them in the colony, where special provision for their care and treatment has been made, and where they may live as largely self-supporting agents, and not remain complete burdens to the taxpayers of the State.”

“This is the cold argument from economy's sake freed entirely from all considerations that should weigh heavily in the scale of common humanity in seeking to extend Colony provision for this helpless class.”

The managers report that nearly one-third of the patients were under twenty-one years of age, and they find that there is a pressing and rapidly-growing demand for provision for children, who, they wisely say, should not be forced to live in continuous intimate daily contact with adults. They easily acquire detrimental habits, and learn many through adult association that they should be taught to avoid.

Our greatest hope is with the young epileptics. We should have buildings specially designed and

constructed for children. The buildings should include workshops, kindergartens, and schools, where all influences demanded for the co-equal and healthy all-round development and education of the child may constantly go on.

A good many people more sentimental than practical have spoken strongly against placing colonies for epileptics near the asylums for the insane. It is pretty well known that I have, from considerable experience, formed a contrary opinion, and in this I am supported by the report I have just referred to. They state that they have found the difficulty and necessity for suitably caring for cases suffering from temporary mental disturbance.

The marginal difference between epilepsy and insanity is often so frail as to make it imperative that the epileptic be treated at times as a wholly irresponsible agent. Pre- and post-epileptic paroxysms of mental disturbance and excitement lasting from twenty-four hours to a week or longer is a distressing condition for a large number of other patients to witness and feel, and as matters now stand we have no relief from it. The statistics given show that 12 per cent. of the cases required this isolation during the year for an average duration of a fortnight.

One part of the statistical report which goes into very minute details, and which is very interesting to us as responsible for the expenditure of the rate-payers' money, is the fact that the Colony was able to produce 50 per cent. of the cost of maintenance during the first year, and over 56 per cent. the second year, and the authorities are of opinion that there is every reason to believe "that the value of manufactured and home products will ultimately reach 75 per cent. of the entire cost of maintenance."

That we could reduce the cost of maintenance of our cases is a consummation most devoutly to be wished, and if we have the courage like the Edin-

burgh people to buy 700 acres, there does not appear to be any reason why we should not. The Craig Colony Directors say that the property cost the State \$115,000, and during the two years of the Colony's existence it produced nearly 35 per cent. of the value of the original cost.

The wisdom of providing proper accommodation for both the chronic and acute cases of mental disease is so thoroughly demonstrated both in Europe and America, even on the economic basis, that the wonder is that it has not been more widely followed. It is a matter of sincere regret to me that with all the wealth of this country there is no voluntary institution to compare with Bielefeld or State Institution like Wuhlgarten at Berlin.

The public institutions of a country are the standard of its civilisation. If we are not to be rated lower in the scale of civilisation than Germany or America we must set to work in earnest and prove that as Guardians of the poor we are determined to do our duty.

We must and will have more information as to the best methods of treatment for cases suffering from mental disease, not only in the interests of the patients, but also in the interests of the State.

We need at any rate have no fear as regards the public. When they fully realise the necessity that exists for making better provision for this unfortunate class they will insist upon the best means being adopted of, as far as possible, reducing the number of the mentally defective, and so carry out the command of old to comfort the feeble-minded.

I beg to move—"That in the opinion of this Conference a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into and report upon the present state of the mentally diseased in England and Wales, and as to the best methods of treatment, both as regards the patients and the cost to the ratepayers."

(A.) Report from the Committee of the House of Commons on Madhouses in England, 1815.

(B.) Presidential Address in the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association, by Dr Tuke, 1898.

*British Medical Journal.*



(C.) Treatment of Imbeciles and Epileptics, by J. M. Rhodes, M.D., C.C., and A. M'Dougall, C.A., J.P. *Poor Law Journal* Offices.

(D.) Pauperism, England and Wales, 1898. Return.  
Eyre & Spottiswoode.

(E.) Poetical Works. John Greenleaf Whittier.

(F.) Fifty-first Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy.

(G.) The Treatment of Pauper Feeble-Minded. Miss Clifford.  
F. B. Ratchford, Didsbury.

(H.) Report of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity, Massachusetts.  
Wright & Potter, Boston.

(I.) Rapport fait au nom de commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi sur les aliénés, par M. Theophile Roussel, 1884.  
P. Mouillot, Paris.

(K.) Care of the Feeble-Minded. F. M. Powell.  
Charity and Correction Report, 1898, Boston, Mass.

(L.) Congrès International pour l'étude des questions des enfants des vagabonds, et des aliénés, Anvers, 1894.  
J. Browsers & Fils, Anvers.

(M.) Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of Craig Colony.  
N.Y.S. Reformatory Press, Elmira.

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### DISCUSSION.

Dr RHODES, replying to Mr Chance, said there were institutions in Germany specially devoted to the treatment of children.

Mr CHANCE congratulated the Conference on having a paper by Dr Rhodes, who was a great authority on the subject—in fact, he knew as much about the question as any one in England. He (Mr Chance) had not much criticism of the paper to offer, for he so thoroughly agreed with it. There was no more important question to be considered in the present day. Dr Rhodes recommended combination between Boards of Guardians. He (Mr Chance) did not know whether any of the Guardians present had tried combining with other Boards; if they had, their experience had probably been similar to his own, that it was a difficult matter. London had dealt with this question by providing the Asylum at Darenth. There would be more likelihood of getting something done if the County Councils would take up the matter. However, if Boards of Guardians would combine he quite agreed with Dr Rhodes that they might do the work very well, and much more economically. But all Boards could not work together like the Manchester and Chorlton, for they had not got such men as Dr Rhodes and Alderman M'Dougall. Difficulties arose when they began to consider the case of scattered Unions like those in North Wales. There would be no difference of

opinion as to the gravity of the problem to be faced, and it was a question whether the State should not provide for increased powers of detention of the mentally afflicted, with a view to preventing such persons from going about and propagating their species. Royal Commissions were very useful, but very slow, and in this case the necessity for immediate action was generally admitted. The idea of the liberty of the subject must be put aside in dealing with these persons, and they must be permanently detained, and firmly but kindly treated. In that way the evil might be materially diminished. Dr Rhodes had referred to the colony at Chalfont St Peter. He was sorry that Mr Montefiore Micholls had not been invited to the Conference, for he might have liked to say something in defence of his institution, though he probably would not have dissented from the statement that voluntary effort was not equal to dealing with the matter. (Hear, hear.)

Mr PRINCE (Holywell) said he thought the paper deserved the most careful consideration. He thought that it warranted a stronger resolution than that proposed by Dr Rhodes. They all knew by this time how Royal Commissions worked. If they had to wait seven years for a report there would be grave mischief in the meantime. The question was ripe for immediate discussion, and had already (in March last) been under discussion at a Conference of six of the North Wales Unions. It was then felt that some separate institution should be provided for the feeble-minded and epileptic, where they would have the benefit of specialists' care. It was, however, very difficult to get Guardians to combine for anything. They looked at matters from a selfish point of view. They must sink their differences and unite for one grand common object. Dr Rhodes spoke of Chorlton and Manchester as the pioneers in the movement, but in March last Mr Bircham (L.G.B.) stated that although these Unions had combined for certain purposes they had done practically nothing except purchase a bit of land. (Laughter). [Mr BIRCHAM—At that time.] At the Conference in March he proposed that the County Council should help them by providing a special institution for the six Unions represented on that occasion. He subsequently proposed the purchase of a building that was once a gaol, and then, until lately, a Jesuit College. But for the casting vote of the Chairman they would have purchased it. He thought that the four-shilling grant should be extended to the feeble-minded and epileptic. He did not think there would be any difficulty in getting County Councils and Unions to press that point. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BENNETT (Newtown) said he hoped that they would in time have special institutions for the treatment of these cases, and also that by combination they would be able to close some of the Unions which were not now, under the altered conditions as regards railway travelling, really necessary.

Mr JONES (Pwllheli) said that in Wales the Guardians were never elected on political grounds. (Oh, oh.) He heard they were in



England. (Laughter.) It would be a good thing if they could combine for the purpose of dealing with the feeble-minded. (Hear, hear.) But it would be necessary that a law should be passed preventing Guardians from withdrawing from the combination afterwards.

Mr SYDNEY TAYLOR (Hawarden) inquired what was the proper authority for dealing with these questions. The County Councils were recommended by some, and the Guardians by others, and nobody seemed to get any nearer an understanding on the question. (Hear, hear.)

Mr WILLIAM ROBERTS (Holywell) said he was quite in sympathy with the paper, and thought that the Boards of Guardians were better than the County Councils for dealing with the question. But it was for the Guardians themselves to make a move in the matter and amalgamate for the treatment of the feeble-minded and epileptic poor. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. T. H. HUGHES (Newtown) cordially agreed with the previous speaker, and thought that when the Guardians of North Wales realised the immense importance of the subject, they would sink their petty jealousies and deal with the matter. Having at present the oversight of an afflicted person, he knew something about the question. He desired to express his deep thanks to their excellent Honorary Secretary (Mr P. Harding Roberts) for having induced Dr Rhodes to give them the benefit of his long and unique experience. (Cheers.) Welsh people could make sacrifices if they were convinced of the necessity for doing so. They had but to look at the various places of worship and schools, and the building up of the National Educational fabric to see that. (Hear, hear.) They would be equally zealous in the highly religious duty of doing the best for their afflicted brethren, and would in the near future co-operate in the establishment of homes for those who were mentally afflicted. (Cheers.) They could thereby render a service to the Great Master, who Himself took pity on the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. (Cheers.)

Captain GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN said it would be better that the County Councils should take this matter up than the Guardians, who could rarely agree owing to the different circumstances of each Union. If they could induce the County Councils to take up the matter, they would have a better prospect financially, but it was probable that a change of the law would have to be made to enable them to deal with the classes in question. It would be a good thing if these unfortunate people could be removed from the Workhouses and placed in proper institutions in charge of specialists. They could not have proper treatment in small Workhouses, and he hoped that something would be speedily done to remove the epileptics from the Workhouses to an institution where they would receive the treatment and care which were essential. (Hear, hear.)

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS (Hon. Sec.) said the subject of the



paper was one that had forced itself before the public of North Wales, and one that would require attention in the immediate future. He fully agreed with Dr Rhodes, whom he thanked personally for having first of all asked Alderman M'Dougall, of Manchester, to read a paper, and then finding that that gentleman could not, coming and honouring them with his own presence. (Cheers.) There was no one more qualified to speak on Poor Law matters than Dr Rhodes, who had made them a life study. (Cheers.) The financial question was the boggy that was always trotted out whenever any new project came up for consideration. The County Councils Association was pressing for a four-shilling grant for imbeciles in the Workhouses, and if that was obtained there would be no objection to providing special institutions. There was a complete consensus of opinion that it was most undesirable to mix the imbeciles and epileptic with the ordinary inmates of the Workhouses. Such a state of affairs strengthened the aversion of the respectable poor to come into the Workhouses, and the consequence was seen in the lengthy out-relief lists. Therefore an improvement in the mode of dealing with the feeble-minded would be to some extent a solution of the problem of relief. (Cheers.) Who should undertake the work? There was much to be said both for the Guardians and the County Councils. The question had been under the consideration of the Flintshire County Council, and they had a Conference of five of the North Wales Unions, and it was evident that the real difficulty was one of expense—the rates. That the County Councils had no power to spend money on providing for imbeciles was, he believed, the opinion of the Clerk of the Flint County Council. But the Guardians had the power to spend money on the classes in question, and to combine with other Unions for this purpose. The provision of Special Homes would be not only a true economy, but would be in the best interests of the deserving poor, whom stress of circumstances had forced upon the rates, and who were at present compelled to mix with the demented. (Hear, hear.) The difficulty might be got over by a combination of Boards of Guardians whose contributions might be made *pro rata* for the number of inmates. He held that such an institution, plus four shillings per head for each inmate, would be self-supporting if not a financial success. He feared that a Royal Commission would be only shelving the question. It occurred to him that a Conference of the Guardians of North Wales would be far more likely to lead to a satisfactory arrangement.

Mr PRINCE (Holywell) proposed that a representation be made to the Local Government Board in favour of allowing the grant of four shillings to imbeciles and epileptics maintained in a certified institution for that class.

Dr RHODES said that at his request the Foreign Office sent out a circular to the various ambassadors for information as to foreign methods of dealing with the feeble-minded and epileptic, but little

information had been rendered in reply thereto. As to Mr Chance's suggestion that the marriage of defective persons should be forbidden, he might mention that the State of Connecticut prohibited such marriages, and made it a criminal offence for the clergy to aid and abet by carrying out the ceremony. He fancied that the old stupid law of settlement was responsible for most of the friction between Boards of Guardians in the past. (Hear, hear.) They had not as yet done more at Chorlton than buy the land mentioned by Mr Bircham. Various questions had arisen, and the Local Government Board had decided to hold another inquiry, although they had already sanctioned the proposals of the Guardians in the matter. The County Councils Association had taken up the matter of the four-shilling grant, and Sir John Hibbert had it in hand. The question was likely to be dealt with in Parliament next session. (Hear, hear.) As to the proper authority, he thought it depended very much on the character of the district, and the number of cases to be provided for. He was inclined to say there that day, that the County Council would be the better body to deal with the matter. There was no difficulty in getting the epileptics into the Homes when once they were started, for the friends were the great and effective compulsory power, being glad to get rid of a grave source of danger to their families. The cost of the Homes need not alarm them. Working out the rateable value of North Wales at nine millions sterling, and calculating the cost of the land and buildings at thirty years' purchase, it would not make a difference of more than a farthing in the pound. His own idea was that the cost of the epileptics should be defrayed on the same principle as that of the lunatics common over the whole area and districts to pay something additional for such cases as they sent. Mr Harding Roberts had thanked him for coming to the Conference. He could only say it was a pleasure to him to come, and if he could be of any assistance to the Guardians he would be very glad to come there again. (Cheers.) For the sake of the epileptics and the decent poor he hoped that something would be done to separate the dirty and the indecent from them. Epileptics deserved much better treatment than they had hitherto had. They gave better accommodation in the asylums to the drunken and vicious who had brought their misery on themselves. If Guardians wished to combine, there would be no obstacle in their way. In conclusion he begged to express his thanks to Mr Jenner Fust (Local Government Board) for the great assistance he had rendered him all through the negotiation of the Chorlton Board. (Hear, hear.)

In reply to Mr Bennett, Dr RHODES stated that he thought there should not be more than forty-eight patients in a Home, and that there should be one nurse to about twelve cases.

Replying to Dr Price of Bangor, Dr RHODES stated that provision should be made for young idiots, in populous centres it might be a separate institution, but where there were only small institutions it should be an annex.



It was unanimously resolved that there should be a Conference of all the Boards of Guardians in North Wales to consider the question, and that it be held at Chester, Mr Harding Roberts to make the necessary arrangements.

The CHAIRMAN moved a hearty vote of thanks to Dr Rhodes for the paper. Mr William Thomas (Holywell) seconded, and Mr Lloyd (Holywell) supported the proposition, which was carried by acclamation, and briefly acknowledged by Dr Rhodes.

Miss EVANS then read the following paper :—

## NURSING IN WORKHOUSES—NURSING AMONGST OUTDOOR POOR.

By Miss A. B. EVANS,

*Late Guardian of St Asaph Union.*

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I HAVE divided my subject to-day into *a*, Nursing in workhouses ; *b*, Nursing amongst our outdoor poor.

I will take *a*. first, and if my remarks are few it is not for want of material, but because the subject is one that is being attentively studied by our Guardians ; whereas *b*, efficient nursing amongst our outdoor poor, is as yet in its infancy. Also, it is to be regretted that in many instances Guardians not only refuse to support the claims of trained nurses, but even oppose grants being made to them. *a*. Good nursing is mainly dependent on two things,—1. proper housing ; 2. well-trained nurses. Although in North Wales we are slowly improving, still we are far from the state of efficiency that is to be found in our larger infirmary wards. First of all, our buildings are miserably small, and badly planned ; in many cases quite unfit for the purpose, wanting in ventilation and sanitation, with too few wards, so that infirm as well as sick have to share the same rooms. In 1896, this Conference, then assembled at Oswestry, passed a resolution, stating “ further provisions were required by Guardians to compulsorily remove sick and helpless cases to the Workhouse infirmary, if, in



the opinion of the medical officer, sufficient care and supervision could not be made for them in their own homes." Why, our wards are overcrowded as they are ; and from St Asaph, Holywell, Cardiff, Swansea, Festiniog, and Aberystwyth, we hear the same complaint, "No room." We cannot afford to pull down our existing inconvenient buildings, owing to the expense ; but now that so many Boards of Guardians are being compelled to enlarge, or build, a great opportunity presents itself to them, and it is to be hoped they will take advantage of it. New sick wards ought to be built, right away from the Workhouse ; or existing ones enlarged, sanitation and ventilation improved, baths supplied, hot and cold water laid on, and the hundred-and-one appliances put into the wards without which the sick cannot be properly nursed. And if the sick wards are built right away from the house, they should be called infirmaries. There is a great deal in a name ; and sick people have been known to refuse to go and be cured in the Workhouse, preferring to linger on and die at home, because of the disgrace they imagine the word and place implies. It is sentiment, but sentiment dies hard in this land of ours. Guardians will have to devote a great deal more time and attention to the management, needs, and requirements in the sick wards than they do at present, before any great improvement can be seen.

*Efficient Nurses.*—The greater proportion of our nurses are not hospital trained, a fact that is much to be deplored, although we shall be bound, in consequence of the Local Government Board Order of August 1897, to elect hospital trained nurses in future. One great difficulty Boards have had to contend with is that of getting Welsh-speaking hospital trained nurses. Guardians insisted, and rightly so too, that nurses should be able to speak to their patients in their mother tongue ; but there Guardians stopped, and, shortsightedly, never encouraged in any way the

Associations that were formed to train such nurses for them. Only last year, "The Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association" decided to give up this work of training nurses and supplying them to Boards of Guardians, owing principally to lack of support. We cannot expect Welsh-speaking trained nurses to drop from the clouds; and we ought to encourage and support these associations, particularly as we see no sign of Government taking the matter up and supplying us, as they do the army and navy, with our own staff of nurses. "The Northern Workhouse Association" is still doing good work, and has supplied Wrexham Infirmary with two nurses, the Guardians in return contributing £2. 2s. a year to their funds, an example that other Boards might follow with advantage. Another difficulty in getting nurses is caused by the insufficient salary we offer, the long hours we expect from them, and the dull life. The demand for nurses is greater than the supply, and as long as we expect our nurses to be on duty more or less for twenty-four hours, all the year round, except for a brief fortnight or so, and then offer them less salary than we would give a good servant, so long shall we find difficulty in getting suitable nurses. We must offer our nurses a living wage, shorter hours, better food, and proper assistance,—by this I do not mean pauper assistance, which is often worse than no assistance. If we wish to draw to our Workhouse infirmaries suitable probationers to help our nurses, a scheme of affiliation with hospitals should be formulated, by which, after the probationer has had say eighteen months' training in a Workhouse, that time will count as time served when she goes on to a hospital.

#### *B. NURSING AMONGST OUR OUTDOOR POOR.*

In 1388 Richard II. passed an Act permitting impotent or helpless beggars to settle down in the towns where they were then residing, instead of treating them as rogues and vagabonds, as they had hitherto

done. This was the first step the State took towards looking after the sick and infirm; and from that time the law has shown more and more leniency towards those suffering from sickness or old age; and in 1834, when the new poor law was passed, the duty of the State to protect, and look after the helpless sick and infirm, was fully recognised. Outdoor relief was put on to a firm basis, and it was seen that to give a man money enough to barely keep body and soul together was not sufficient, his health also required attention, so medical officers were appointed, a step in the right direction, but one that did not go far enough. Trained nurses ought to have been appointed as well, and for these reasons: take any blue-book you like, you will find the majority of paupers getting relief are old and infirm, many of whom are bedridden, or suffering from rheumatism, fits, blindness, cancer, sore legs, weakness, asthma, &c.

*Chronic Cases.*—Now in chronic cases like these a doctor's skill is of little avail, he can only prescribe medicine, whereas it is good nursing that is wanted, and one parish nurse said that if she had nothing else to do, dressing bedsores would alone keep her busy. And, to quote Mr Bircham in his report for 1897, "The poorest home may be made fairly comfortable after the visit of a sympathetic trained nurse." Then a nurse can also see that the poor, bedridden, &c., who are in receipt of relief get it themselves, and not, as too often happens, it is spent by some wastrel husband, son, or other relative. Also, through seeing her patients oftener than the doctor or relieving officer, the nurse can tell what relief in kind the patient is most in need of, and whether the case is one in which the House should be offered.

*Infant Mortality.*—Infant mortality is often heavy in towns and villages where otherwise the death rate would be low; this arises not only because the parents do not know how to treat their children's simplest ailments,



but they show deplorable ignorance of any way of feeding them beyond the most elementary. Here the nurse steps in and says what is to be done, what food given, and how cooked ; and as the child is father to the man, so a sickly child left unnursed, and badly fed, means sooner or later a burden on the rates. I have seen a sickly infant of a few months old being fed on half-raw potatoes and tea that had been standing on the hob most of the day.

### PREVENTION OF INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

Epidemics of chicken-pox, whooping-cough, measles, scarlet fever, even diphtheria and typhoid, frequently make their appearance not only in our towns but in our country parishes. The presence of the trained nurse is invaluable, not only because the nursing, upon which so much depends, is efficiently done, but she sees to the proper distribution and use of disinfectants, prevents as far as possible those visits to the sick that the neighbours make, which, although they may not necessarily catch the disease themselves, result in it being carried from house to house through a village. Under trained nursing strict isolation is carried out, the spread of the disease is prevented, and others who, if illness was in their houses, would have to apply for outdoor relief, are kept from requiring it, and thus the rates are saved.

*Sudden Cases of Illness.*—Take the bad cases of illness that very often occur. The head of a family is stricken down ; good nursing is essential ; the Guardians choose the best nurse they can from amongst the neighbours ; but what, after all, do they know ? £20 was spent in six months in Abergele on nursing alone, and for all the good done, the comfort realised by the sick nursed, the money might just as well have been thrown away ; and wherever there is no trained nurse

in a parish, this waste of the ratepayers' money is going on.

If for one year Guardians would do their duty and visit the sick paupers in their parish, I venture to think the awful sights they witnessed would so appal them that their one idea would be to get a well-trained nurse at any cost. A nurse costs £70 a year, and if supplied from the Jubilee Nursing Association, they return the first year £40, the second year £20, and the third year £10; and generally at the end of three years no difficulty would be experienced in raising the money, the nurse's worth having been proved. Most of our towns of two and three thousand inhabitants have by now trained nurses, but the difficulty is felt in our smaller parishes, where it is quite impossible for them singly to raise £70 a year. This difficulty has been met in some places by three, and even four, parishes joining together, and by keeping a bicycle, donkey, or pony carriage, the nurse has been able to do the work satisfactorily. Boards of Guardians have the power to subscribe towards parish nurses to the extent of £10 a year, but some Guardians have objected to subscribing, owing to the rate being levied over the whole Union. They say it is unfair that rural parishes should pay for what they do not share in. Now this is a fallacy, for if the services of a nurse lightens the rate only in one place, the pressure over the whole Union is less. Boards of Guardians do not meet these cases in the generous manner they ought; one Board in North Wales gave as contribution to a parish nurse, who was taking over all the pauper patients in a parish which had cost the ratepayers about £30 a year before the nurse came, the large sum of £2. 2s. a year. Can we expect private individuals to help these nurses when our public bodies give such totally inadequate support? The County Councils give grants to classes in connection with the St John's Ambulance Society, but surely the employment of trained nurses amongst our

poor is of greater importance than the slight training received by the poor who attend the Ambulance Classes. It would be better if they would grant this money to the parish nurse instead, on condition she gave lectures during the winter on subjects relating to nursing that the Council could themselves fix. This would be of far greater benefit to the working classes at large.

Let Guardians realise the great responsibility their name and position entails upon them, and endeavour without fear or favour, creed or politics, position or party, to meet and grapple with this question of the efficient nursing of the poor—a question that when solved will not only mean burdens kept off the rates, and reduction of rates, but the brightening of many a home, the lighting of many a sick bed, and the prevention of that taint of pauperism entering a house, which where once it enters, it seems never able to leave.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Mr PETRIE (Holywell) said that but for very good nursing he would not have been there that day, so he appreciated the work of the trained nurses. If Boards of Guardians wished to get thoroughly good nurses, they must pay good wages, and try to brighten the lives of the nurses by giving them comfortable and well-furnished rooms, and plenty of outdoor exercise and holidays. Nurses should also be placed on a footing of equality with the Workhouse matron, and not treated as general servants. (Hear, hear.)

Mr W. H. LLOYD (Holywell) urged that trained nurses should be employed not only in the interests of the patients but also of the ratepayers.

Dr ROBERTS (Bangor) said the paper would give a great impetus to the employment of properly qualified nurses. The provision of nurses for the outdoor poor was only in its infancy, but they were doing their best in Anglesey to get an adequate staff of trained nurses to visit the sick poor. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CROMAR (Wrexham) said that when the question of a contribution towards the expenses of a parish nurse came up for discussion recently at that Board it was urged that if the Guardians contributed there would be applications from all the other parishes. He thought it would be a good thing if they could have such a nurse in every parish. (Hear, hear.) Excellent work was being done in



Wrexham where there was an isolation hospital fully equipped, the work of which had kept the death rate at a very low figure. (Hear, hear.) The repugnance at one time felt as to availing themselves of its use had almost wholly disappeared, people having come to recognise its value. (Hear, hear.)

Dr PRICE (Bangor) said he hoped that the Guardians present would go back to their various Boards as apostles of the gospel preached by Miss Evans, as it was most discouraging to doctors and nurses that Guardians took such little interest in hospital administration. The work of the nurses thus became dull and monotonous, and disagreements which might have been nipped in the bud cropped up. Nursing was a necessity and not a luxury, as some Guardians seemed to think. With regard to the alteration of old buildings, he thought experience showed that it was often cheapest in the long run to rebuild entirely. Guardians should devote more time and attention to the sick wards, and thereby encourage the doctors and nurses. He was glad Miss Evans had drawn attention to the necessity for paying better wages, also for having Welsh-speaking nurses. (Hear, hear.) The quicker they got even a middle-aged pauper well the better. They could not tell what good nursing might save them, or what expense indifferent treatment might involve them in. He would be glad if the duties of the indoor nurses were defined with greater detail in the general orders.

Dr RHODES said the new order on nursing in Workhouses made it compulsory to have trained nurses. As Chairman of the Northern Workhouse Nursing Association he knew that the small Unions had great difficulty in getting good nurses. To get a first-class nurse they must pay £27. 10s. a year, and find dresses, aprons, caps, and cuffs. The nurses' dietary must also be more varied, more fresh vegetables, and plenty of jam. Their rooms also must be made more comfortable, and should contain arm-chairs. There should also be bed-cranes, so that bedridden patients might assist in raising themselves. There should be bed-rests, which were a great comfort to the patients. Nurses must have adequate holidays. At Chorlton the nurses had two hours out every day, and half a day's holiday a week, with a whole day off every month, and three weeks' holiday every year. He did not think that after a hard day's work nurses would be fit to go lecturing of an evening. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BENNETT said that the Newtown Board granted five guineas a year to the District Nurses' Association, but one of the Guardians subsequently contended that if they did that they would have to make a like allowance to every district. The result was the Board rescinded the resolution. He would send a copy of Miss Evans' paper to the Guardians in question. (Hear, hear.)

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS said he was very glad to hear that they could get a first-class nurse for £27. 10s., for his Board was paying £30, so they ought to get an extra first-class nurse. (Hear, hear.) He thought that the infirmary should, if possible, be quite

apart from the Workhouse; for one thing, it would tend to reduce the friction between officials. Wherever possible they should get Welsh-speaking nurses. He thought that some of the nurses were too exacting in their demands, and would not adapt themselves to their surroundings, thus becoming a source of trouble and inconvenience. He read of one at Keynsham who left because there was no sea view and no tennis court. (Laughter.) The necessity for good nursing was admitted, and it was to the desirability of having the infirmaries separate from the Workhouses that he wished to direct their attention. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE said that the old aversion of the people to using the isolation hospitals for infectious cases was becoming a thing of the past.

In reply to Mr Norris (Kyffin) Mr BIRCHAM said there was no special limit to the amount that the Guardians might subscribe for nursing purposes.

Mr BIRCHAM (Local Government Board) said that one of the most gratifying features of the Conference was that there had been no necessity for him to put in one word; he had had to say something sometimes at previous Conferences to keep the ball rolling. He thanked Miss Evans for the paper, which was one of the best papers he had read on the subject. He was always telling Guardians their power, and entreating them to support liberally any nursing institutions started in their district. (Hear, hear.) It was good policy from the point of view of economy to restore people to health as quickly as possible, quite apart from the higher way of looking at it. The supply of Welsh-speaking nurses was gradually increasing, and he was glad of it, for there was a feeling that it was better to be killed by one who could speak Welsh than cured by one who could not. (Laughter.) If Dr Charles Williams had been able to stop during the morning, he could have told them of the admirable provision for trained nurses in Merionethshire, a sparsely populated and mountainous county, but with a better nursing system than counties like Carnarvonshire.

He hoped that Anglesey would not be long before it had trained nurses. The Anglesey Guardians could not do better than send a young girl to Manchester or Liverpool, and pay for her training, on condition that she returned to them when competent to do the work. There had been a great increase of trained nurses in the last four or five years. (Hear, hear.)

Miss EVANS, in reply, said every Guardian should read Dr Downes's (L.G.B.) celebrated letter on nursing, showing on the one side the cost of a trained nurse, and on the other the wonderful economy that a trained nurse could effect in the sick wards. As to friction between nurses and other officials, the Guardians could do a great deal to prevent that. It was not right for the Board to leave practically all the work of supervising the sick wards to the lady Guardians—the responsibility rested on all Guardians alike. If the Guardians took an intelligent interest in the sick poor, it would

compel them to direct their attention to the evils of insanitation and overcrowding. (Hear, hear.)

Miss Evans and several Guardians bore testimony to the valuable services rendered during an epidemic in the Mostyn district. Lord Mostyn brought down at his own expense a trained nurse from Liverpool, and although she had no knowledge of Welsh, it was remarkable how speedily she became in touch with the people, and how highly the Welsh people appreciated her services. Her presence brought confidence into the district, and there was not a single fatal case which came under her treatment.

Mr J. Petrie proposed, and Mr G. Hughes (Llanelly) seconded, a vote of thanks to Miss Evans for the paper. This was carried unanimously, and Miss Evans thanked the meeting.

Dr RHODES proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the President for the manner in which he had discharged his duties. Nobody could have been more courteous or kept them in better order. (Cheers.)

Rev. Archdeacon EVANS, seconding, said the bi-lingual requirement was a serious difficulty for Welsh Guardians in engaging doctors and nurses. Some years ago a doctor was engaged who thought he knew Welsh, and he ordered in that tongue chicken broth, but the people misunderstood him and boiled their puppy. (Laughter.) It all arose from a slight difference of accent. (Laughter.)

The PRESIDENT thanked the members, and proposed a vote of thanks to the Hon. Secretary, Mr Harding Roberts, who had, he said, kindly consented to act as the Secretary for another year. (Cheers.)

Mr Bennett seconded the proposition, which was carried with acclamation.

Mr HARDING ROBERTS said the best return for his services was the good attendance of the members, and the kind assistance of those who had contributed papers.

The proceedings then terminated.





## North-Western District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOR THE  
COUNTIES OF CHESHIRE AND LANCASHIRE, HELD  
AT ST GEORGE'S HALL, LIVERPOOL, ON FRIDAY,  
30TH SEPTEMBER 1898, AND FOLLOWING DAY.

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*President.*—The Rt. Hon. SIR JOHN HIBBERT, K.C.B.

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference.

\* Guardians specially delegated by their Boards.

### ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE—

- \* Fletcher, J. (Chairman).
- \* Judson, J. H.
- \* Messenger, Rev. J. F.
- \* Seymour, Benjn. (Clerk).

### BARROW-IN-FURNESS—

- \* Boulton, W.
- \* Cannon, J.
- \* Cleator, J.
- \* Taylor, F. (Clerk).

### BARTON-UPON-IRWELL—

- \* Hart, Rev. D.
- \* Maybury, J.
- \* Rogers, J.
- \* Whitworth, J. W. (Clerk).

### BIRKENHEAD—

- \* Martin, Dr J. T. (Chairman).
- \* Jones, W. Mersey (Vice-Chairman).
- \* Mossop, Mrs Rose.
- \* Carter, John (Clerk).

### BLACKBURN—

- \* Ashworth, T.
- \* Catterall, E.

### BLACKBURN (*continued*)—

- \* Grimshaw, T.
- \* Hill, R.
- \* Ibbotson, W. H.
- \* Lord, E. J.
- \* Radcliffe, R. C. (Clerk).

### BOLTON—

- \* Heywood, John (Chairman).
- \* Kearsley, Edward (Vice-Chairman).
- \* Ward, Thomas.
- \* Cooper, H. I. (Assistant Clerk).

### BUCKLOW—

- \* Hignett, Rev. Canon (Chairman).
- Davies, W.
- \* Griffiths, A.
- \* Meadows, H.
- \* Leigh, George (Clerk).

### BURNLEY—

- \* Smith, James, J. P. (Chairman).
- Bibby, James (Vice-Chairman).
- Greenwood, Samuel, J. P.
- \* O'Hagan, Right Honble. Lady.
- \* Whittaker, John, J. P.
- \* Horn, J. S. (Clerk).

Unions represented at the Conference—*continued.*

**BURY—**

- \*Firth, S., J.P. (Chairman).
- \*Peel, R.
- \*Whowell, F.
- \*Isherwood, J. (Clerk).

**CHESTER—**

- \*Knowles, Thomas (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Lee, W. J.
- \*Turnock, Wm. (Clerk).

**CHORLEY—**

- \*Burwell, W. W. (Chairman).
- \*Dickinson, H. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Whittle, Humphrey N.
- \*Stanton, Bernard (Clerk).

**CHORLTON—**

- \*Tomlinson, C. L. (Chairman).
- \*O'Doherty, Cornelius, M.D. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Rhodes, J. M., M.D.
- Sale, Mrs.
- \*Bloomfield, D. S. (Clerk).

**FYLDE—**

- Hodgson, W. S., J.P. (Chairman).
- \*Brandwood, W. R.
- \*Rhodes, Thos.
- Smyth, Mrs.
- \*Stott, Mrs.
- \*Brown, F. H. (Clerk).

**GARSTANG—**

- \*Whittaker, G. (Chairman).
- \*King, Alfred.
- \*Boys-Stones, Rev. G.
- \*Noble, John (Clerk).

**HASLINGDEN—**

- \*Ashworth, John (Chairman).
- Higham, Miss A.
- \*Lord, James.
- \*Townson, James.
- \*Hay, J. Kerr (Clerk).

**LANCASTER—**

- \*Royds, Rev. C. Twemlow (Chairman).
- Barrow, Mrs.
- \*Kitchen, John.
- \*Preston, Robert.
- Willis, Miss.
- \*Ennion, Joseph (Clerk).

**LEEK—**

- \*Sheldon, J. P. (Chairman).
- \*Hambleton, A. J.
- \*Wooddisse, J.
- \*Shaw, Joseph (Clerk).

**LEIGH—**

- Clegg, R. J. (Chairman).
- \*Karfoot, Rev. Dr.
- \*Laycock, John
- \*O'Neill, Rev. R. J.
- \*Williams, E. (Clerk).

**LIVERPOOL—**

- Rathbone, W. (Vice-Chairman).
- Burke, T.
- Cripps, J., J.P.
- Gearing, E. J.
- \*Horrigan, E.
- Latham, J.
- \*Laurence, Thomas D., J.P.
- Scragg, A.
- Thorburn, Miss F. J. S.
- \*Hagger, H. J. (Clerk).

**MACCLESFIELD—**

- \*Bridge, Rev. Thomas (Chairman).
- \*Robinson, Rev. J.
- \*Thompson, E.
- \*May, J. Fred. (Clerk).

**MANCHESTER—**

- \*Rooke, George, J.P. (Chairman).
- \*M'Dougall, Alderman.
- \*Walker, J. B.
- \*Macdonald, George (Clerk).

**NANTWICH—**

- \*Boote, Thomas R.
- \*Parton, Thomas.
- \*Sadler, James.
- \*Speakman, C. E. (Clerk).

**ORMSKIRK—**

- \*Travis, G. F. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Holland, Mrs.
- Hollins, Miss.
- \*Mulgrew, J.
- \*Dickinson, A. (Clerk).

**PRESCOT—**

- \*Brown, F. J. (Chairman).
- \*Hallas, G. H. (Vice-Chairman).
- Middlehurst, W.
- \*Sylvester, Rev. S. A. K.
- \*Mann, A. F. (Clerk).



Unions represented at the Conference—*continued*.

PRESTON—

- \*Woodhouse, Robert (Chairman).
- \*Alsop, John.
- \*Dodgson, William.
- \*Ormrod, John.
- \*Clarke, James (Clerk).

PRESTWICH—

- \*Briggs, Thomas, J.P.
- \*Hulton, Joseph.
- \*Jennison, Chas.
- \*Ogden, Edward W. (Clerk).

ROCHDALE—

- \*Wadsworth, H. (Chairman).
- \*Woolfenden, Thos. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Purdy, Richard.
- \*Leach, R. A. (Clerk).

RUNCORN—

- \*Baxter, Thomas.
- \*Darlington, Thomas.
- \*Stokes, Joseph.
- \*Ashton, John (Clerk).

SALFORD—

- Simcock, A. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Darby, C.
- \*Somers, Miss.
- \*Townson, F. (Clerk).

TOXTETH PARK—

- \*Mather, Richard (Chairman).
- \*Killip, Robert (Vice-Chairman).
- Booth, Miss.
- \*Ellis, Mrs.
- Healey, Mrs.

ULVERSTON—

- \*Hodgson, James, J.P., C.C. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Nash, W. R., J.P.
- \*Dean, C. W. (Clerk).

WARRINGTON—

- \*Pilling, G. (Chairman).
- \*Jolley, A. J. } (Vice-
- \*Patterson, Dr J. N. } Chairmen).
- \*Sutton, J. Clowes (Clerk).

WEST DERBY—

- \*Mead, G. L. (Chairman).
- \*Lunt, S. T. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Ellison, Alderman J.
- \*Houlding, Right Hon. Alderman J. (Lord Mayor of Liverpool).
- \*Cleaver, H. P. (Clerk).

WIGAN—

- \*Ball, E. (Chairman).
- \*Boardman, William.
- Hennessey, Mrs.
- Johnson, Mrs.
- Johnson, Mrs R.
- \*Phillips, Mrs Annie.

WIRRAL—

- \*Knowles, W. (Chairman).
- \*Morris, Chas. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Phillips, W. R.
- \*Ollive, J. E. S. (Clerk).

The following Unions were not represented either by Delegates or other Guardians :—Clitheroe, Congleton, Lunesdale, Northwich, Oldham, Stockport, and Tarvin.

VISITORS.

Emmott, Mrs, Oldham.  
Alexander, William, M.D.

Jenner-Fust, H.	}	Local Govern- ment Board Inspectors.
Moorsom, W. M.		
Mozley, J. R.		

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## FRIDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER.

The LORD MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL (Alderman John Houlding, J.P., a Guardian of the West Derby Union) welcomed the members to the city. He said he remembered the first Conference being held, and though he had missed one or two of its annual sessions, he believed the President, Sir John Hibbert, whom he was about formally to ask to take the chair as usual, had never missed a Conference. (Applause.) His own experience had been that no Conference did more valuable work. He had pleasure in inviting the Delegates to dinner at the Town Hall, and in stating that the fine Autumn Exhibition in the Walker Art Gallery would be open to members of the Conference, and they would also be admitted to the Empire Theatre. Then, as this was a two days' Conference, Mr Ismay, of the White Star Line, invited the Conference to go aboard the "Britannic" at noon on the following day, and afterwards, if the weather favoured, to take a sail in the "Magnetic" as far as the North-west Light. In case of rough weather, the members of the Conference must satisfy themselves with a less extensive view of the docks and shipping. He hoped the Liverpool arrangements would be found as acceptable as those in any other place visited by the Conference. (Cheers.)

Sir JOHN HIBBERT said it was his very pleasant duty to move a hearty vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor. It was fortunate that Liverpool had been visited by the Conference during the term as Chief Magistrate of such an old and valued fellow-Guardian and member as Alderman John Houlding. (Applause.) Mr Houlding had always shown great interest in the Conference, and had often given it the benefit of his experience and opinions. The Conference would meet early on its second day in order to take advantage of the

invitation from the White Star Line. (Applause.) He was sure they would all join with him in giving their heartiest thanks to the Lord Mayor for his kind welcome. (Cheers.)

The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation.

Mr H. J. HAGGER, Hon. Secretary (who was cordially greeted), intimated that letters of apology for absence had been received from Mr Chaplin, President of the Local Government Board ; Mr Russell, Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board ; Sir Hugh Owen, Permanent Secretary of the Local Government Board ; Mr Bircham, Local Government Board Inspector ; Mr Cropper and the Hon. Mrs James Cropper ; Miss Grafton of Heysham Hall, Lancaster ; and Mr Chance, Hon. Secretary of the Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences.

The PRESIDENT, referring to the late Sir Arthur Forwood, Bart., P.C., M.P. (whose funeral was then taking place), said—My Lord Mayor, ladies and gentlemen, before I open my address on this occasion I wish on my own behalf, and on behalf of the Conference, to refer to the great loss which the city of Liverpool, and I might say the nation generally, has just sustained in the death of Sir Arthur Forwood. We know that to-day the whole city of Liverpool is deploring his loss ; we know that to-day its representative men will follow his remains to the grave. I am sure any one who has known Sir Arthur Forwood would recognise his great abilities and his very useful career. Personally I had the privilege for some years of sitting opposite to him in the House of Commons—of course we sat on different sides—and of there learning his worth. I also had the privilege of many private and confidential communications with him, when he first went to the Admiralty as the Parliamentary Secretary, because I had myself filled that post for the six preceding months, and therefore we found many subjects of mutual interest. In that way I learned to value his work, and I am sure you will all join with me in this tribute to his memory, and in sympathising with the city of Liverpool and with Lady Forwood and the family in this bereavement. (Hear, hear.)

The PRESIDENT said they met together for the twenty-fourth Conference, and he could now look back upon nearly a quarter of a century of these meetings. He felt thankful that he had been able to be present on all the twenty-three previous occasions. (Hear, hear.) One ought to be thankful for health and strength to continue taking part in the great and important work which they all had at heart. (Hear, hear.) At the present moment the country was passing through a most prosperous state of industrial affairs. He did not know that the various branches of trade had ever been more prosperous than at present. In view of that prosperity he was rather disappointed at the present state of pauperism in the country. Pauperism had not decreased in that way which the prosperity of the country ought to have led it to do. When wages were good, and employment general, was the time when the habits of thrift and fore-



thought would enable the workers to lay up something for a rainy day. What were the causes which had prevented the decrease of pauperism? There was the increase of population to be thought of; but, on the other hand, there was a very material improvement in the position of nearly all classes of people in the country. Wages had been higher than ever before, and therefore they might have hoped for a better state of things. There were two causes—the great strike of the engineers and the strike of the South Wales coal miners—which might have brought about the increase of pauperism. From the moment the engineers' strike began he found an increase of pauperism in some of the Lancashire towns, and pauperism in Wales had increased enormously in the last few months. But while taking that gloomy view, they knew that there existed to-day greater habits of thrift than ever before, as proved by the returns of the savings banks and of friendly societies. A country that could spend £130,000,000 of money upon alcoholic liquors ought to be able to live without any necessity for Guardians or relief. (Hear, hear.) They must take the country as it was, and hope that better habits would prevail in time, and that the Guardians, by strict administration, would instil habits of thrift and forethought into the people. After all, that was one of the great powers Guardians held in their hands. If they gave money right and left in outdoor relief they were weakening the tendency to thrift and forethought in the country. That was why he had always advocated strict administration—he did not mean harsh administration—for it was the duty of the Guardians to try and inculcate thrifty habits rather than to be liberal with relief. (Hear, hear.) The *Labour Gazette* reported that “apart from the South Wales coal strike employment was generally good in August.” In 117 Trade Unions, with 466,000 members, 2.8 per cent. were reported as unemployed at the end of the month compared with 3.5 per cent. in August 1897; while 187,000 persons received advances of wages, and only 800 decreases. Agricultural labourers were also fully employed, and in Essex, where much land had passed out of cultivation, “not a man, woman, or child willing to work need be in want of a job.” (Hear, hear.) That was a good report, and labour was very scarce in Kent. In the cotton, woollen, and worsted trades the employment of women was good, only 4 per cent. being on short time against 6 per cent. last year. Now, let them begin their detailed comparison of pauper statistics by glancing at the pauperism on 1st January 1898. On that date there were 836,900 paupers, of whom 231,606 were indoor and 605,125 outdoor. Though this total only showed a nominal increase (233) over 1st January 1897, there was the very large increase of 3,644 in the indoor class, and the rather satisfactory decrease of 3,422 in the outdoor. When, however, this army of paupers was viewed in detail, it did not seem so serious as they might at first sight be disposed to think. Of the pauper army, 90,540 were insane, 13,563 vagrants, and 225,562 children under sixteen years of age. Deducting the above

classes, 507,248 adult male and female paupers remained, and of these 16,884 were returned as having had medical relief only. Hence 490,364 was the net pauper roll. While society must accept the burden of the insane, the vagrants as well as the outdoor paupers might be reduced in numbers by strict administration—(hear, hear)—while nearly a quarter of a million of children could surely, for the most part, be as clay in the hands of the potter, and made into good citizens, free from all taint of pauperism. (Applause.) The figures he had been giving referred to the whole country. Coming to the North-Western District, though he was not satisfied with it, it compared very favourably with other parts of the country. (Hear, hear.) The pauperism of the whole of England and Wales was at the rate of 26.9 per 1,000 of the population; of the South-Western District it was 39.5 per 1,000; and of the North-Western District 20.4 per 1,000. Thus the pauperism of the south-west was nearly twice as much as in the north-west. The monthly returns for the North-Western District, however, bore out what he had said as to an unsatisfactory increase. February this year showed an increase for their own District of 2,973 paupers over last year, March of 3,516, April of 2,858, and May of 3,513. In June, some two or three months after the end of the engineers' strike, there was still an increase of 3,246 paupers in the North-Western District over the same period of last year. He did not know whether Mr Jenner-Fust could tell them how that increase had taken place, but it was a matter for the consideration of all connected with the North-Western District. He had now to come not to general statements, but to Mr Jenner-Fust's returns, for which they ought to be very thankful to that gentleman, because while in their various Unions they thought they were going on swimmingly and pleasantly, these returns told a tale which it behoved them to look at very carefully indeed. (Hear, hear.) In addition to his usual statistics, Mr Jenner-Fust had this year handed him a comparison of the pauperism in January 1898 with that of the five previous years in Lancashire and Cheshire. He would deal first with the thirty Unions of Lancashire. The number of paupers returned in January last was 77,900 as compared with an average from January 1893 to January 1897 of 72,500, or an increase of 5,400; being indoor 2,400, and outdoor 3,000. The return showed that out of thirty Unions twenty were worse, two about the same, and eight better. The return did not show the number of vagrants and lunatics, but there were vagrants in January last 1,620 compared with an average for the five years of 1,120, an increase of about 500; and lunatics in asylums 8,200 last January against an average for the five years of 7,700, an increase of 500. That was in Lancashire, and he would now speak of Cheshire. Cheshire, however, was not so bad as Lancashire, and it was only just to Cheshire to note this improvement on her part. The increase of Cheshire indoor paupers was 373, and of outdoor only 52; a total of 425. Eight Cheshire Unions were in a worse position, one was unchanged, and three were



better. Lunatics in Cheshire had increased by 197. Next, he would take the later return, as to the difference between the pauperism of 1892 and that of 1898 in the North-Western District. Inclusive of vagrants and lunatics in asylums, there was a pauper increase of 13.98 per 1,000 in Cheshire, and of 18.28 per 1,000 in Lancashire, or of 17.38 per 1,000 in the six years. The North-Western District had been growing worse, while the rest of England and Wales had been on the whole growing better. In his return the Inspector said :—"No doubt there had been an increase of population in the district, showing less pauperism in the North-Western District than in the rest of England and Wales, still the rate of increase since 1892 has been higher than in England and Wales generally, the latter being 0.26 and the former 1.55. It was, indeed, the reverse of satisfactory to find pauperism on the increase in the North-Western District. Although the marked improvement which had taken place in Workhouses and Workhouse infirmaries had removed much of the repugnance felt to entering such institutions, and so had tended to an increase in indoor paupers, there could be little doubt that a closer adherence to the principles of the Poor Law in the administration of relief would speedily result in a diminution of the present numbers." In Lancashire the indoor paupers had increased 5,446, every Union, save the small Union of Lunesdale, showing an increase, though two showed only nominal increases—Ulverston of only four and Garstang of only six. The outdoor paupers had increased 6,357. Seven of their own Unions showed a decrease of outdoor poor, and he was glad to especially congratulate the Unions of Prescott, Toxteth Park, and West Derby on this decrease. Bury also showed some improvement. Of the twenty-three Unions which showed an increase, Bolton and Oldham were marked by a considerable increase, doubtless owing to the engineers' strike. Taking indoor and outdoor, Lancashire showed an increase of 11,800 (Oldham, Bolton, and Blackburn accounting for 4,000 of this increase). Cheshire had an increase of 870 indoor (eleven out of the twelve Unions showing an increase), and 893 outdoor (only three Unions showing a decrease). That was a total increase (indoor and outdoor) of 1,763. Stockport had the largest increase. Still Cheshire stood better than Lancashire in the comparison, as it had only increased 13.98 per cent. against 18.28 in Lancashire. He thought that Cheshire had taken a turn for the better. (Hear, hear.) He would now mention some statistics, which might not seem in place at that Conference, but he did so as an object lesson. In the Whitechapel Union, in the sixth week of the quarter ending March 1870, there were 1,410 indoor paupers, in the corresponding period of 1898 there were 1,413; and of outdoor paupers there were 5,339 in the corresponding period of 1870, and in 1898 only 24. The cost of the out-relief in Whitechapel in 1870 was £6,600, and in 1898 £24; and while the indoor and outdoor poor were respectively 22 and 79 per cent. of the total number of paupers in 1870, they were respectively 98.3 and 1.7 per cent. in



1898. He mentioned that just to show what could be done by strict administration, though he did not say that he was in favour of stamping out all outdoor relief—(hear, hear)—because he thought there were many cases where it was necessary, but it should not be given indiscriminately and lavishly. (Hear, hear.) The Report of Whitechapel 1898 stated that “the progressive results exemplified in the table as regards the diminution of outdoor relief have not been accompanied by a proportionate nor even an appreciable increase in the number of indoor paupers relieved. This is probably owing in part to the discouragement which the system has produced of speculative applications for relief, and in part to the concentration of official and voluntary effort upon the dispauperisation of the poor.” Then as to the cost of pauperism generally, he did not wish to lay too much stress on the increase in the cost, because in some respects it was something to be grateful for, that the increase had in part arisen from a desire to treat the poor in the most humane manner possible. He believed that the money spent on the Workhouse infirmaries and separate infirmaries was well spent, and was true economy, in enabling the pauper to return to his work as soon as possible and earn his own living. (Hear, hear.) There had been an increase. The total gross cost of pauperism for the year ending March 1897 was £10,432,000 greater than in any previous year, or 6s. 9½d. per head of the estimated population—an increase of a farthing per head. The receipts in aid were £2,556,000, and the rate per head was 14s. 0¼d. in the metropolis, and 5s. 6¾d. in the rest of the country. The greater part of the increase was for the indoor and not the outdoor poor. The expenditure in maintenance was greater than in any of the previous forty years; that on outdoor relief was larger than in the sixteen past years, but less than in the other twenty-four years. Comparing the North-Western District with London, he found that, with nearly the same population, the figures for maintenance were in London, £855,300, and in the North-Western District, £291,400; and for out-relief, in London, £221,200, against £223,900 in the North-Western District. So that the North-Western District was spending half a million upon what the London Boards spent twice that sum. One question with reference to outdoor relief was the granting of relief by way of loan, a system for which the law provided, and which might, he thought, be extended in granting outdoor relief to the able-bodied and their families. With regard to sick nursing, every gratitude was due to Mr William Rathbone, whom they were glad to see present—(applause)—for his pioneer work and liberality for many years in promoting the training of nurses. (Hear, hear.) The return of Mr Jenner-Fust showed that the Guardians generally had been acting very well in carrying out the orders of the Local Government Board with respect to sick nursing. Comparing 1892 and 1898 in this district there was an increase of from 396 to 478 day nurses, and of from 109 to 141 night nurses; while the number of patients per nurse had been reduced

from 17 to 14. What, however, he did not like, was to find an increase of from 279 to 286 in the pauper sick attendants. There were many objections to the employment of pauper attendants on the sick, but of course special difficulties were experienced in securing trained nurses for the smaller Workhouse. In the first place, the nurses did not like the small dull Workhouses, and they ought not to think too harshly of the nurses for it. (Hear, hear.) He had had his attention drawn to the subject by a lady who knew a great deal about it—Mrs Steele—and the drawbacks were such as no Guardian who wished to see that the nursing was properly done could refuse to carry out. If they got a properly trained nurse and wished to keep her, it was the duty of the Guardians to make her life as comfortable as possible. (Hear, hear.) Lunacy had increased not only in that district but all over the country. The report of the Commissioners showed the average annual increase of lunatics in decennial periods from 1859 to the present time. The average annual increase in the last ten years was 1,933, being 875 males and 1,058 females, while the increase in 1898 was 2,600. The number of lunatics in 1859 was 36,700, of whom the pauper lunatics numbered 31,400; in 1869, 53,100, pauper lunatics 46,700; 1879, 69,800, paupers 61,600; 1889, 84,300, paupers 75,600; and 1898, 101,900, and paupers 92,760, being 1 lunatic to 536 persons in 1859, and 1 lunatic to 308 persons in the present year. Of the 92,760 pauper lunatics in the present year, 67,700 were in lunatic asylums; 17,000 in Workhouses; 5,900 in receipt of outdoor relief; and 2,000 in registered and licensed houses. It was a sad matter to contemplate, especially when they knew that in Lancashire four large asylums were so full that they could scarcely take in an additional patient. They were building a large additional asylum near Warrington at an expense of something like £500,000. What was to be done? The asylums should be curative places; there were other means of getting rid of imbeciles and idiots. Workhouses under proper regulations ought to be used for chronic cases, and receive the 4s. per week allowed to the asylums. (Hear, hear.) As the Lunacy Commissioners were in favour of this, he was surprised it had not as yet been sanctioned by the Local Government Board. The County Councils Association had pressed it on the Local Government Board, but the Board moved very slowly. A great deal had been said about discharged soldiers as paupers. He had seen a return which had been issued by the War Office on this question, and it showed that there were not so many discharged soldiers now paupers as they had been led to think. There were 81,800 men in Class I. of the Army Reserve, and 330 were receiving relief, or 1 in 255; of army pensioners there were 80,200, of whom 1,664 were known to be having relief, and 250 others were alleged to be pensioners. Taking it at the higher figure, 1,914, that was 1 in 42. Of 407,700 men discharged from the army without pensions, 1,330 were known to be in receipt of relief, and 5,300 other paupers were alleged to be old soldiers. That would



be 6,600, or 1 in 61 of the latter, and a total of 1 in 176 of all classes. If they compared that with the figures for the whole of the male population over twenty years of age, estimated at 9,907,000, they would find that there were in receipt of relief 1 in 46, or, exclusive of army men, 1 in 37, so that the old soldiers stood very well in this respect. (Hear, hear.) During the earlier part of this year he presided at the sittings of two departmental committees at the Local Government Board, one of which had the object of bringing the Local Government Board into a position of dealing with business more rapidly—(hear, hear)—while the other dealt with the proposed devolution of powers. He was happy to say that the recommendations on the first head had been carried out, at a cost of £20,000 a year, and that the business of the Board would be brought more up to date than hitherto. (Hear, hear.) He was sorry to say that as regards the question of devolution of powers from the Local Government Board to Local Authorities he had not been so successful, but a degree of success had been obtained. Local Authorities were not children, and they ought to be freed from some of the trammels which now oppressed them. In consequence of threats of parliamentary opposition from some non-county boroughs and the larger urban districts, they were not able to make large recommendations, but they had succeeded in recommending the abolition of the necessity for the Local Government Board's sanction to a number of such appointments as collectors, &c., to the number of 6,000 persons. The recommendations were: "In our opinion a considerable relaxation is possible in the rule which obliges Boards of Guardians to report to the Local Government Board the appointment of a large number of persons serving under them; and we recommend that in the case of collectors of poor rates and of other contributions for the support of the poor, school attendance officers, inquiry officers, porters, industrial trainers, and superintendents of labour (amounting in the aggregate to nearly 6,000 persons), the practice may be discontinued." Sir John Hibbert, in conclusion, said—I can only trust that the great work which you have in hand may be undertaken by you in the same spirit as it has been in the past by Boards of Guardians. I believe a strict administration of the law will tend to economy, and to the increase of comfort and happiness of the people. I trust that you may all of you have health and strength to perform the duties you undertake to the satisfaction of the two counties and for the welfare of our common country. (Prolonged cheering.)

Dr RHODES read the following paper:—



## THE TREATMENT OF PAUPER IMBECILES AND EPILEPTICS BY COMBINATION OF UNIONS.

By J. MILSON RHODES, M.D., C.C.,  
*Chairman of the Chorlton and Manchester Asylum Committee.*

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### STATISTICS.

IN the Report of the French Senate on Lunacy it is asserted, on the authority of Foderé, that there is no insanity among barbarian races, it is invariably found among civilised nations (*A*).<sup>\*</sup> If this assertion is true, and I have no reason to doubt it, what a car of Juggernaut is this boasted civilisation of ours, which in its progress has destroyed the intellect and caused a hundred thousand of our fellow-subjects to be numbered among the insane.

The English and also the Scotch Commissioners in Lunacy are of opinion that there has not been "any important increase of occurring or fresh insanity, and that the undoubted large progressive increase in the numbers has been chiefly due to accumulation, the result of the co-operation of several causes" (*B*). An opinion from such a source is entitled to tremendous weight, and all must hope it is correct.

The recent increase in the number of cases under treatment ought not to be ascribed to any alterations in the law. We find that in other countries where the laws relating to lunacy have remained unaltered, an increase corresponding to that recorded in our own country has taken place. Indeed we are by no means alone in our misfortunes. It is true that the number of insane in England and Wales has risen from 58,591 in 1878 to 99,365 in 1898; but Scotland is in no better case, the numbers there having increased during the last twenty years from 8,651 to 14,086.

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\* For references A to K, see page 251.

On the Continent things are no better. In one year the number of lunatics in France rose by upwards of 4,000. In the Department de la Seine alone, the cases rose from 9,300 in 1884 to 12,592 in 1894 (*D*). In Belgium the numbers have doubled during the last twenty years. Nor can Prussia be congratulated on its sound-mindedness, for their certificated insane rose from 31,830 in 1888 to 37,184 (*E*) in 1891, and the increase in mental disease continues. In the United States things are even worse. In the State of Massachusetts the numbers of insane have trebled during the last twenty years (*F*). With these figures before them, it is no wonder that our American cousins are asking if nothing can be done to stem this strongly-flowing tide. Already the State of Connecticut has enacted a law making it criminal for the feeble-minded to marry, and also punishing those aiding and abetting such.

We must all hope that good will result from this rather drastic legislation, but I must confess that I have not any very great faith as to a large reduction in the number of the insane resulting therefrom. I am more of the opinion of the Danish Commissioners (*G*). In Denmark not only is the absolute number of lunatics increasing, but the ratio of certified lunatics is also increasing, as the figures clearly show:—

NUMBER OF INSANE PER 100,000 INHABITANTS.

Year.				
1860	-	-	-	117.0
1870	-	-	-	137.3
1880	-	-	-	165.7
1890	-	-	-	196 (estimate).

The Danish Lunacy Authorities, commenting on these figures, say that when some years ago an alarm was caused by the continual demand for more Lunatic Asylums, and the steadily increasing number of insane shown through the Census, consolation was afforded by the thought that this was not necessarily owing to an

increase of insanity. It might, on the one hand, only result from a more accurate counting, or, on the other hand, from the increasing civilisation, the population no longer, as formerly, largely keeping their lunatics at home. But this consolation is probably given up by everybody as an illusion, and it is certainly best to be prepared for the present for a continued increase of lunacy, and for the regularly increasing demand for help which will be made, and they go on to say: "The best help is, however, a generally improved hygiene, which is the only means in our power to remove, or at all events diminish, those nutritive disturbances which cause the outbreak of mental diseases."

I fancy improved hygiene will do more than so-called moral legislation, though the number of cases caused by drink is no doubt enormous.

Dr Groth, in his work on Chronic Alcoholism, gives some statistics which are interesting to us as proving how a large sum is being spent on lunacy simply because intemperance is rampant.

The following are the percentages of insanity caused by intemperance (*H*):—

Austria - - - -	12	per cent. of admissions.	
Belgium and Holland, -	13 & 14	„	„
Denmark - - - -	10	„	„
England - - - -	30 to 33	„	„
France - - - -	24	„	„
„ Dept. de la Seine ( <i>A</i> )	34	„	„
Germany, Southern -	7	„	„
Prussia - - - -	27 to 28	„	„
Switzerland - - -	15	„	„
„ Zurich - - -	40	„	„
United States - - -	18 to 20	„	„

It is clear that not only this cause, but all the causes of insanity require careful inquiry and consideration. Especially is this the case when we come to consider the insanitary conditions under which the poorer classes



live and work. Why has London, with six million people, 20,000 insane, while Lancashire, with four million, has only 9,500?

The solution of the problem how best to treat our mentally diseased poor is becoming so urgent that it bids fair to take the place at Poor Law Conferences that was formerly occupied by our old friend *In versus Out Relief*. It is not only in England that the question is a burning one. At International Conferences, both in Europe and America, this subject is always on the agenda for discussion in one form or another, and upon one point there appears to be wonderful unanimity, viz., that the present condition of affairs is not, and cannot be, satisfactory to those who are responsible for the treatment of this class. This is not only a personal opinion. The Lunacy Commissioners, in their last Report (*B*) express themselves very plainly as to the present position of affairs. "In many of the larger Workhouses adequate comfort and attendance are provided, and, in some few, with a liberal hand. In others, this can by no means be said; and in many of the smaller Workhouses much still remains to be done to bring the nursing of the sick, and the arrangements for the attendance, exercise, amusement, and general care of the insane inmates up to even a very moderate standard" (*B*). I go further than the Commissioners, and instead of saying *much* remains to be done, say that *more* remains to be done than can be done so long as we continue our present thoroughly unscientific system of dealing with the insane under the care of the Guardians. Even the large Unions are realising the necessity of combination for classification. Chorlton and Manchester have combined to provide a Joint Asylum, with two separate parts, one for the insane and the other for the sane epileptics. Edinburgh is also making proper provision for their insane, and have set an example to us by buying 700 acres for their new Asylum. A moment's consideration will

show you that the reasons against detaining lunatics in small Workhouses are overwhelming, *e.g.*—

1. The inadequate means of classification where you have only thirty cases. Some of the cases are certain to be filthy, others noisy or restless, thus injuriously affecting the better class of cases.
2. Twenty cases require as perfect classification as 200, and with small numbers proper classification is impossible.
3. You cannot in your present Workhouses provide adequate airing grounds for your cases. Even at Leavesden and Caterham the Commissioners complain of the inadequate arrangements for the exercise of the inmates beyond their airing courts.
4. You cannot provide in small Workhouses for differentiating the treatment in accordance with the condition of the patient. In most the choice lies between the prison-like padded room and the common ward. There are plenty of other reasons, but it appears to be hardly necessary to protest against the patients being kept in small Workhouses, because for economic reasons the Asylum appears to be rapidly becoming the final goal of all classes of mental disease, as the following figures prove :—

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PAUPER LUNATICS.

Year.	Percentage in Asylums.	Percentage in Workhouses.	Percentage with Relatives.
1859	56.18	25.36	18.46
1869	61.12	23.93	14.95
1879	63.92	25.97	10.11
1889	69.01	23.15	7.84
1897	74.59	18.96	6.45

The diagram placed before you must convince any one that there is at present no uniform standard as to

what cases require Asylum treatment and what are proper cases for the Workhouse. Wales is evidently of opinion generally that little more than half the cases require Asylum treatment—Cardigan has even less than 50, viz., 48.8.

Anglesey, Carmarthen, Carnarvon, Denbigh, and Monmouth vary between 50 and 59 per cent.; as you will notice, all these are Welsh, or next door to Welsh.

Flint, Gloucester, Hereford, Lincoln, London, Pembroke, Stafford, Suffolk West, and Westmoreland have from 60 to 69 per cent.

The next and largest group of counties with 70 to 79 per cent. in Asylums consists of Bedford, Berks, Cambridge, Chester, Cumberland, Derby, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Glamorganshire, Lancaster, Leicester, Lincoln, Montgomery, Norfolk, Northampton, Notts, Oxford, Radnor, Salop, Somerset, Suffolk East, Sussex, Wilts.

Another large group is that with 80 to 89 per cent., viz., Bucks, Cornwall, Durham, Herts, Kent, Monmouth, Soke of Peterborough, Northumberland, Rutland, Southampton, Isle of Wight, Surrey and Warwick, Worcester and York.

Only three, Hunts, Middlesex, and the Scilly Isles, have a higher percentage than 90.

In considering the question of provision for the insane, the fact that age and sex play a very important part in regard to the numbers for whom accommodation has to be provided must not be lost sight of. Under nineteen years, the number of insane males is considerably greater than that of the females; but after that age, with the exception of the period from twenty-five to thirty-four years of age, the females very considerably exceed the males, the totals being 32,639 males to 38,925 females.

This preponderance of one sex over the other at certain ages is not confined to England. In an analysis I made of seven of the largest Asylums in France, very



nearly the same ratio was found. Under twenty years of age the numbers were in the ratio of 69 males to 37 females; after sixty the figures were 39 to 74, or almost exactly the reverse (*D*). In the case of English idiots the figures are reversed. There are far more male idiots than female, the figures being 1,201 males to 628 females, or nearly two to one. Of course these figures only refer to certificated idiots in licensed institutions.

When we have to consider the question how far profession and occupation influence the number of cases coming on our hands, we find some very interesting information in the new table given in the Commissioners' Report for 1897 (No. XVI.). The table adopts the Census system of classification. Of the ninety-nine groups only fourteen have a greater ratio than 12 per 10,000.

These groups are :—

	ENGLAND.		FRANCE.
	Males.	Females.	
1. Physicians and Surgeons, &c. -	15.8	...	17.7
2. Barristers, Solicitors, &c. - -	14.0	...	
3. Civil Service, - - - -	14.8	1.2	
4. Musicians and Teachers - -	12.3	10.5	...
5. Actors, &c., - - - -	9.5	17.2	...
6. Chemists and Druggists - -	14.1	...	...
7. Woolstaplers, Cotton and Wool Dealers - - - -	16.9	24.4	...
8. Commercial Travellers - -	13.9	...	4.2
9. Goldsmiths - - - -	12.6	2.9	...
10. Tobacconists - - - -	12.2	3.1	...
11. Farm Servants and Labourers -	8.0	12.0	...
12. Sweeps - - - -	12.9	...	...
13. Hucksters and Hawkers - -	21.5	37.5	...
14. Inn and Hotel Servants - -	9.9	18.6	...
			( <i>B</i> )

A glance over the table shows that professions associated with great personal responsibility, such as the

medical and legal, cause a heavy strain upon the mental constitution, and this is also true of occupations in which long hours are worked.

We have not time to-day to discuss all the causes, but it is my duty to point out that in over 20 per cent. of the male and nearly 26 per cent. of the female cases the fact of hereditary influences having existed was ascertained. As the statistics of "verified causes" give almost exactly the same figure as regards "intemperance in drink" as a cause of insanity in men, and only one-third of this proportion as regards women, it is evident that this is an important matter to those upon whom rests the responsibility for making provision for this class of cases.

Valuable as is the table, its value would be enhanced if it gave the additional particulars as to whether the mental instability was inherited from the paternal or maternal side. On the Continent it has been found that the number of admissions of cases where the mother has been mentally unsound are 45 per cent. greater than where the insanity has been on the side of the father. With a knowledge of facts like these, it is no wonder that the Commissioners speak out strongly upon the want of provision for those who are, to borrow a French term, "on the frontier of folly"—the feeble-minded. "We have been painfully impressed," say the Commissioners, "by the obvious want of suitable provision for an extensive and necessitous class of persons who are known as 'the feeble-minded.'" They are not the subject of such a degree of mental unsoundness as renders them certifiable in the present state of the law, and they therefore cannot be detained against their will, although they are not of sufficiently sound mind to be able to take adequate care of themselves. Too many of these girls discharge themselves at frequent intervals, only returning when their means are exhausted and a more or less immoral life has rendered them unfit for work. Many

of them become the mothers of children, who in turn swell the ranks of the mentally defective.

To the protection of this large class of persons we think that legislation might properly be directed, while the liberty of the subject is at the same time maintained. Only the other day I came across the report of a case that very well illustrates what a large amount of money "the how-not-to-do-it system" costs the rate-payers. The case was that of a "feeble-minded girl of the higher grade who was accepted as a pupil at the Massachusetts School for the Feeble-minded when she was fifteen years of age. At the last moment the mother refused to send her to the school, as she 'could not bear the disgrace of publicly admitting that she had a feeble-minded child.'" Ten years later the girl was committed to the institution by an order of the Court. During the ten years she had given birth to six illegitimate children, four of whom are still living, and all feeble-minded. The city where she lived had supported her in the Poorhouse for a period of several months at each confinement, and now have the burden of the lifelong support of her unfortunate children (*E*). I may say that I remember a very similar case in my own Union.

Well, what are we to do with our imbeciles? I have given some of my reasons for objecting to them being detained in Workhouses. Other reasons can be adduced. A few days ago I came across the case of a female nurse who had sole charge of upwards of thirty lunatics at night, half of them males—a very improper state of affairs, *unless they are really sick and helpless*, when trained female nurses are desirable. Yet I can quite understand a Board hesitating at employing a competent male attendant for half a dozen or even less cases.

Most of the leading Boards among the smaller Unions are realising at last how unwise they, like the larger Boards, have too often been in associating the



respectable and the indecent imbecile, the clean and the filthy, and are rapidly coming to the conclusion that the present Workhouse system has all the vices of the aggregate and the segregate system in combination.

A great many Boards are in favour of the provision for all classes of cases being made by the county, and for this plan, where the numbers are small, there is no doubt a great deal to be said. Some propose to place them all in the Asylum proper, others advocate placing them in an annexe or colony. This latter system is being extensively adopted in Germany and in Scotland. The sick and dangerous cases are provided for in small pavilions; the non-violent cases are provided for in houses holding from twenty to thirty in each.

It is a common argument against sending all your cases—acute or chronic—to the Asylum, that under such circumstances the treatment of all the cases degenerates to the simple conservative measures necessary for chronic cases. I do not believe in this charge. I believe that the superintendents and their assistant physicians do their utmost for the cases under their care. After carefully considering the question, I am of opinion that the Asylum for the acute, and the annexe system for the chronic, is for the thinly populated districts the best. But in populous counties like Lancashire and Warwickshire is it necessary that we should go to the County Councils for help?

The new departure in Asylum buildings has not come from the County Councils.\* It is the Poor Law authorities, not only in Chorlton and Manchester, but also in Edinburgh, who have decided upon building a Colony Asylum, which is really providing Cottage Homes on plenty of land for the harmless cases. If two Unions can combine, there is no reason

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\* The County Council of Perthshire is an exception—thanks to Dr Robertson. This Council has erected two houses to accommodate forty-eight in each. The houses are models of what such Homes should be, and the cost of these buildings has only been £104 per bed. I have not seen better either in Great Britain or abroad.

why twenty should not also combine. I have no doubt there are scores of gentlemen here who are on Joint-Hospital Committees for Infectious Diseases. They are only carrying out the system I suggest for the treatment of mental diseases. The additional cost to the ratepayers would be very small indeed. Passing from those suffering from mental disease, of whom the law takes cognisance, we come to that large class, the epileptic and feeble-minded. We have unfortunately no official returns in this country of the number of those suffering from this terrible, and in very many cases, incurable disease. On the Continent, through their military system, they are able to gain a great deal of information in regard to the defective classes. In France Dr Lunier has given great attention to the statistics as regards the epileptics (*H*), and as the ratio of the French insane is rather lower than ours, we shall probably be not far wrong in concluding that their number of epileptics and ours is about the same. In France they have upwards of 30,000 epileptics. Of these 9 per cent. belong to the epileptic insane class, and 1,700 are in Hospitals and Hospices, leaving 28,000 epileptics living with their families, or gaining a living as they best can.

Try to realise what these figures mean — a number of people equal to that of the population of many of our Unions are, through no fault of their own, unable to earn their bread. Especially is this the case with the female sane epileptics—domestic service, occupations associated with machinery, employment in shops or restaurants, are all barred to them, and the consequence is that many of them as a last resort take to the street and come under our care as lock or maternity ward cases.

As Dr Lunier has well pointed out, the treatment for the sane epileptic is not that required for the infirm, the sick, or the insane. Dr Lunier estimates that at least 10,000 of the 28,000 epileptics should be in

proper institutions. Even the apparently harmless inoffensive epileptics are, as every one who has studied epilepsy knows, liable to temporary mental disturbance, a disturbance which may become dangerous, and for this reason, though I am quite aware that some differ from me, I am of opinion that epileptic colonies are best placed, if not actually contiguous, at any rate within a reasonable distance from an Asylum.

We may be told that provision has been made for the epileptic at Magull, where, thanks to Mr Rathbone and Dr Alexander, excellent work has been done for some years past ; but that institution, excellent as it is, no more meets the requirements of the Counties than Chalfont St Peter does the necessities of London—in fact, there is the danger about such institutions that ill-informed people may think that adequate provision has been made.

If any one is under that impression, a glance down the return prepared for the Lancashire Asylum Board will enlighten them. Over 600 sane epileptics are in Lancashire Workhouse wards to-day, and the provision made for most of them is decidedly inferior to that made for the criminal lunatic.

It is not a pleasant thing to acknowledge, but it is the fact that Germany, and some of the States of America, are decidedly before us in realising that the epileptics perhaps more than any other class require consideration at the hands of the State.

If they do not pass from the class of simple epileptics to that of the insane, it is not our fault, for the miserable aimless life they lead is enough to cause the degeneration of the strongest brain.

Germany and the United States are evidently satisfied with the results of their system of treatment. The managers of Craig Colony, U.S., are very emphatic in their reiteration of the statements previously made as to the humanity, utility, and economy of caring for



one of the most miserable classes of the State's dependants.

It requires no fine sense of reasoning to understand that it is a matter of economy to take dependant epileptics from houses where special provision for their care and treatment cannot be made, and place them in the colony where special provision for their care and treatment has been made, and where they may live as largely self-supporting agents, and not remain complete burdens to the taxpayers of the State.

This is a cold argument for economy's sake, freed entirely from all the considerations that should weigh heavily in the scale of common humanity in seeking to extend colony provision for this helpless class. The authorities appear to have good ground for their opinion, for the patients during the first year of existence produced 50 per cent. of the entire cost of maintenance, and 56 per cent. during the second year. The property cost the State £23,000, and it is "a fact worthy of note that during the two years of the colony's existence it produced nearly 35 per cent. of the value of the original cost" (*K*). It may be of interest to the Conference to know that the State of New York resolved to establish this colony in 1894; by the 1st of February 1896 it was ready for the reception of patients.

If it were not for the opinion of Mrs Malaprop, I should have liked to make some observations in regard to the delay *re* another Asylum. However, blessed are the merciful, and we will not discuss that part of the question, especially as this paper is reaching the limit of your endurance; but I do want to say, as you will no doubt also hear from Mr M'Dougall, that in our opinion, the colony system is in all ways preferable to our present system, because it tends to benefit both the ratepayer and the patient.

I beg to move that, in the opinion of this Conference, the time has come when a Commission should be appointed to inquire into the

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE RATIO PER 10,000 OF LUNATICS TO POPULATION.

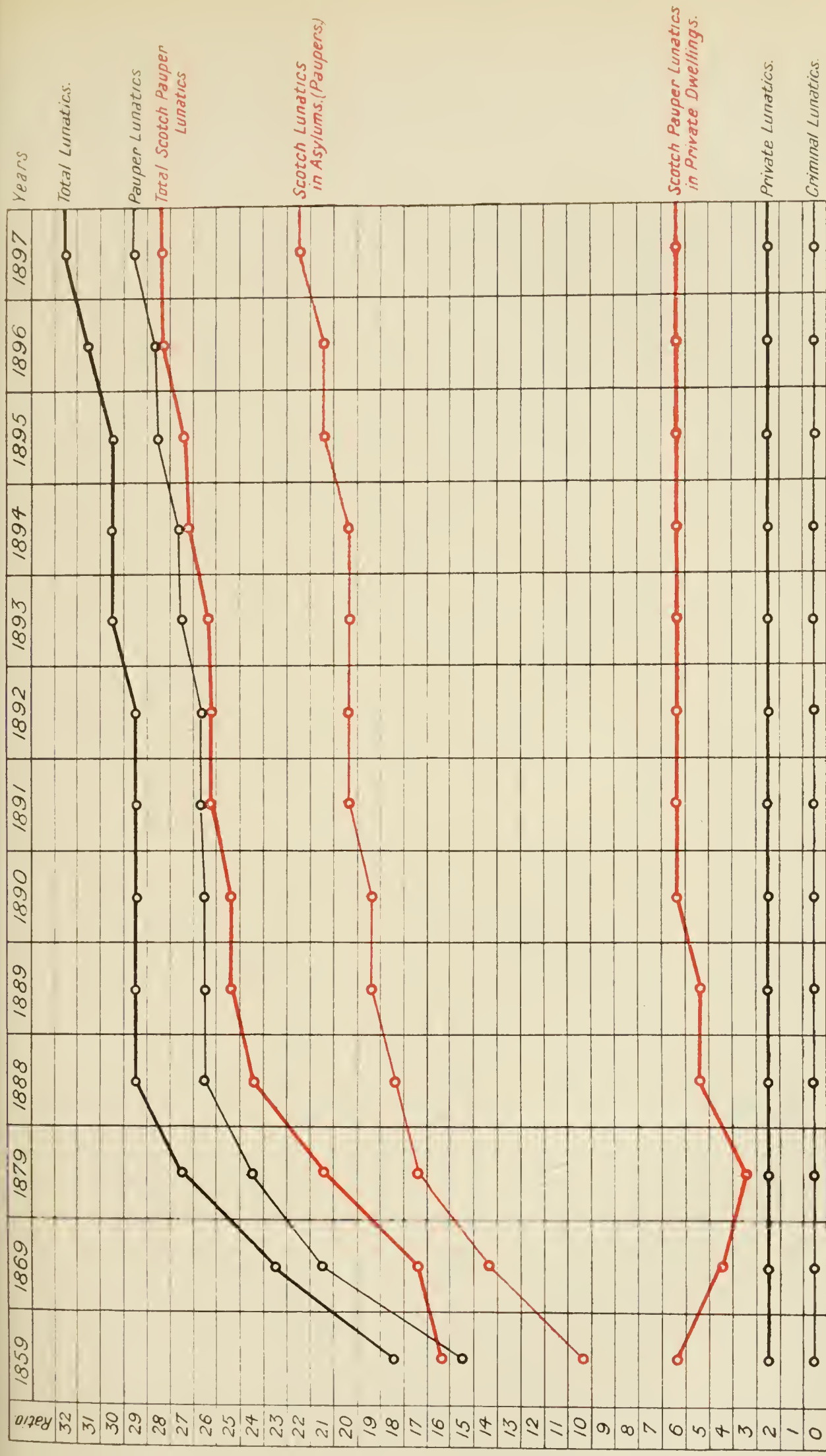
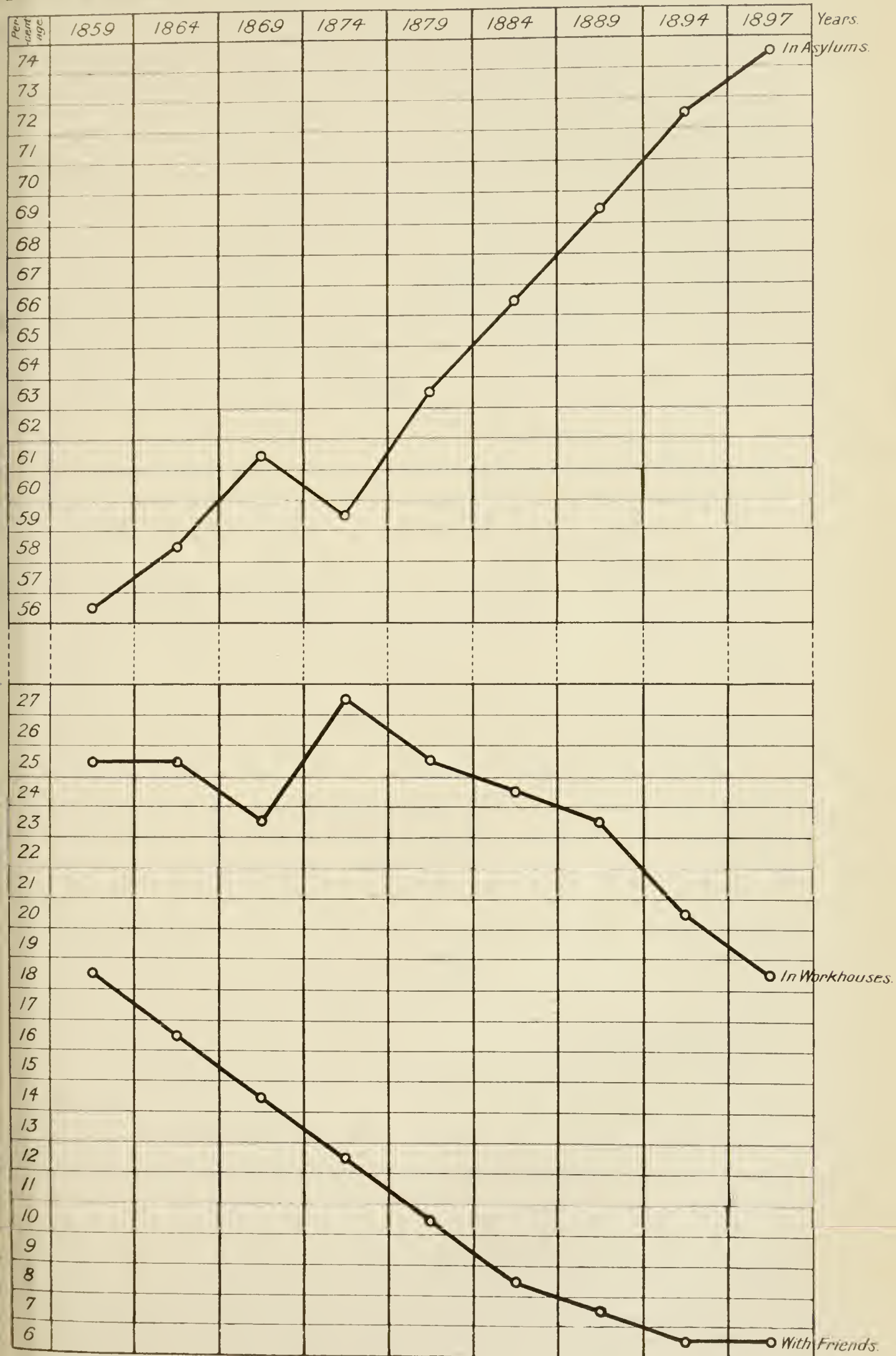


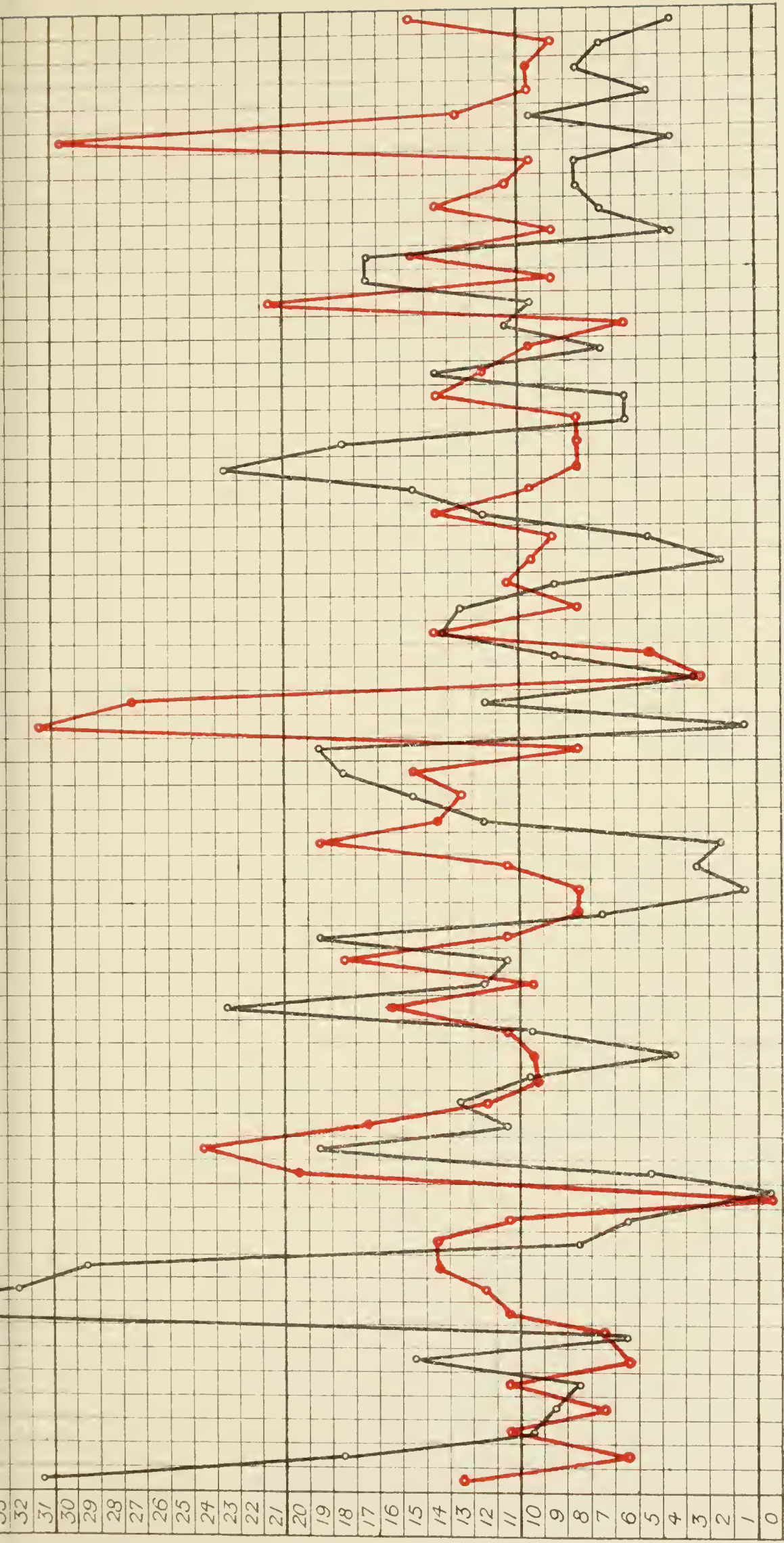




DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PAUPER LUNATICS.







Lower Black Line—Residing with Relatives.

Red Line—In Workhouses.

Upper Black Line—In Asylums.





best methods of treatment as regards imbeciles and epileptics, and that a deputation be appointed to wait upon the Home Secretary to request him to take steps to carry out the wishes of the Conference.

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- A.* Rapport sur le projet de la revision de la loi du 30 Juin 1838, sur les aliénés. J. Roussell. Mouillot, Paris, 1884.
  - B.* 51st Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy. 1897. 1s. 10½d.
  - C.* 29th Report of General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland. 1897. 10½d.
  - D.* Rapport sur le service des aliénés du Dept. de la Seine, 1895.
  - E.* Report of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity. Mass., 1898.
  - F.* Statistisches Handbuch für den Preussischen Staat. Berlin.
  - G.* Denmark, its Medical Organisation. Fr. Bagge, Copenhagen.
  - H.* Dr Groth on Chronic Alcoholism.
  - I.* Dégénérescences psycho-cerebrales dans les milieux ruraux. Dr Lunier. 1884.
  - K.* Report of the Board of Managers of Craig Colony. N.Y.S. Reformatory Press, 1897.
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Mr M'DOUGALL read the following paper :—

## IMBECILES AND EPILEPTICS UNDER THE CHARGE OF POOR LAW GUARDIANS.

BY ALDERMAN M'DOUGALL, J.P.,

*Manchester.*

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THE presence of imbeciles and epileptics in Workhouses is a matter of continual concern to Guardians. The provision of special wards and attendants does not fulfil the recognised conditions under which they ought to be kept. The best that can be done in Workhouses under present arrangements is separation from the other inmates, somewhat greater liberty in the airing yards, and exemption from task-work given as a test.

Some of the imbeciles and epileptics, such as are capable and show inclination, are put to easy work of

the simplest kind, frequently of little value in itself, but adopted for the sake of making some slight break in the monotony of existence. The others, the majority, just loaf and idle through the day, the chief interests of life being the recurrence of meals and the alternation of day and night. Of the imbeciles it may be said that many of them have but slight mental activity; but most of the sane epileptics are mentally acute, are fully conscious of their dreary and hopeless condition, and during the intervals between fits are sensitive to the effects of the constant companionship of the less intelligent imbeciles with whom they are associated.

Guardians cannot be satisfied with the present state of matters. It appears to be impossible to suggest any method of dealing with imbeciles and epileptics within Workhouses that would substantially and permanently ameliorate their condition. Some Unions, taking advantage of the Government grant of 4s. per head weekly for lunatics sent to Asylums, have placed as many as they could of their imbeciles in Asylums, releasing themselves in this way from the disagreeable and depressing duty of dealing with them. This course has appropriated accommodation never intended for such cases, and so filled up all available room as to render the erection of additional Asylums urgent.

There is but little hope of imbeciles becoming suitable for discharge, or ceasing to require continual oversight and care. It is, however, certain that many of them may have what consciousness they possess stimulated to interest in their surroundings and some sense of capacity and self-regard awakened and sustained. With sane epileptics there is good ground for certainty that a fair proportion may be fitted to be discharged capable of self-control and work; also the large majority of the remainder may be so improved that the recurrence of seizures is greatly diminished, and they may be enabled to do really profitable work intelligently with satisfaction to themselves.



The removal of imbeciles and sane epileptics from Workhouses to Home Colonies specially constructed for them, and surrounded by a sufficiency of arable land, may with suitable treatment and training make it possible to deal with them in an altogether better manner. They are not personally blameworthy, and every Guardian recognises their claim to humane and ameliorative treatment.

The number of cases in a single Union is not sufficient to justify the erection of buildings and employment of the organised staff necessary for administration for one Union alone. Combination among Unions to provide accommodation would afford most desirable relief to the Workhouses of the combining Unions, by removing from them the helpless and at present hopeless imbeciles and epileptics, with the knowledge in the minds of the Guardians that they were placing these inmates in surroundings that would mean for some of them fitness for ordinary life and self-support, and for the larger number altogether new impulses tending to usefulness and contentment.

I cannot make any statement as to cost per head. It will be less than the cost of maintenance in Lunatic Asylums. There will be the saving in the cost of life-long support of those who may be discharged to their homes. It is not impossible that if the 4s. grant be continued for the insane sent to Asylums, it may be extended to those inmates sent to approved Home Colonies. However that may be, I am confident that by the time the ameliorative influences have come into play, the policy of placing these sufferers into more or less curative environment will be found to be not only merciful and humane but also economically wise.

The system that experience has shown to be well suited to the needs of both sane epileptics and imbeciles is that of Colony Homes—a number of Homes, each to contain thirty to thirty-five inmates, built within convenient distances from a central administrative block ;

pavilions for hospital purposes and for the retention of patients not suited to be at large, are placed in near proximity to the central block.

This system gives facilities for classification, and especially for the deliverance of sane epileptics from the close society of imbeciles, which is at present one of their most undesirable experiences. It also enables many details of domestic life to be possible. Food is prepared in the administrative block, and taken to the several Homes.

There should be a considerable area of farm and garden land, on which the inmates may be employed. For those whose strength and state of health permit it, daily occupation on the land is most useful and productive of good order and contentment. As a rule epileptics and imbeciles have not been occupied with useful work at home; many, if not most of them, have not even been at school. They come into the charge of the Guardians without education, with very limited mental resources, and accustomed to be regarded as helpless. The first realisation of usefulness has to come to many in the work of the colony, in the garden, or on the land. To awaken the sense of capability and willingness to work is perhaps the most difficult duty the attendants must perform for the patients. It requires time and patience to overcome what has grown to be the habit of relying upon others to do for them the simplest things. At first, when asked to make any exertion, almost all are querulous and unwilling, but pleasing progress is soon observed when suitable work is encouragingly offered, especially when even feeble efforts are appreciated.

It is in relation to employment that a Home Colony is so greatly preferable to a Workhouse. At the Workhouse the attendants are occupied in keeping order, preventing quarrels and injuries, supplying food, and superintending so-called recreation. At the Colony the attendants work with the inmates, guiding them in work

suited to individual capacity, and are able in many cases to arouse dormant activities and abilities, not only useful, but producing in the patient something of self-confidence and hopefulness, with the happy banishment of the dreadful monotony of days which otherwise must be passed in idle endurance.

The good effects of employment are observable both in men and women. The women will of course not be so frequently at work in the gardens or on the land; they will have a good amount of work in the laundry, kitchen, and the daily details of the living rooms and bedrooms of the Homes. But in good weather outdoor work is very beneficial to women. Even apparently helpless children may get real enjoyment in a flower garden by tending, however ignorantly, small plots. The delight of seeing something produced by its own effort and care has the most pleasing influence on such a child. Work on the land trains some of the more capable men to become competent to learn handicrafts and to do useful work of many kinds.

The school for afflicted children is a very interesting detail of a Home Colony. By keeping the classes small, and each class in a separate room, and providing each child with a low chair and desk, interest can be kept up for one to two hours at a time. They are much pleased with coloured pictures, and learn names of objects in the pictures. At Uchtsprunge it was pleasant to see eight bed-ridden children cheerfully interested in watching a teacher draw on a blackboard placed in view of all the beds.

The colony system has one advantage which must have a beneficial influence. It is that all feeling of being enclosed in an institution is removed. Except for the sick in the hospital pavilion, and for the inmates of the pavilion for the helpless or violent, there is no restraint of walls or appearance of enclosure to give the impression of being confined or to create a desire to escape. The management of a number of separate



Homes, each standing in its own garden, and scattered over a considerable area of land, may seem difficult to us, who are accustomed to the locking of every door and the retention of high boundary walls, but it is not found to be so. However necessary confinement within restricted bounds may be for the able-bodied inmates of a Workhouse, it is found that the open door and somewhat free access to the surrounding gardens and land is beneficial to the great majority of imbeciles and epileptics.

Even the passage of a river through the grounds is not dangerous. The river Elster flows through the cultivated land at Alt-Scherbitz, and though the Asylum has been open many years, no accident has occurred. At a large colony in America an artificial lake of considerable extent has been formed as a pleasant feature of the grounds. In summer even bathing is allowed.

At large colonies recreation halls are provided ; the inmates come from the several Homes, and meet for entertainments and concerts. Patients who have become accustomed to daily work, and who possess musical instincts, have been found capable of performing on instruments and becoming members of colony bands.

Reports from colonies of epileptics prove that a certain number of patients are cured and a larger number are so ameliorated in condition that they can be sent home. I quote the following :—

Asylum at Uchtsprunge, near Magdeburg, the Report states that during two years 36 epileptics were cured, or 11 per cent. of the patients ; 42 epileptics were discharged fit for home, or 12 per cent. of the patients ; making 23 per cent. of patients leaving the Asylum in a greatly improved condition.

Report of the Saxon Government on the Colony for Epileptics at Bielefeld states that during sixteen years the condition of 1,273 epileptics had been tabu-

lated. Of these, 8 per cent. had been cured, and 32 per cent. had been so improved that they had been sent home. The Report also states that if patients are brought in at the beginning of attacks, it can be counted that 6 per cent. to 7 per cent. will be cured. No one is counted cured at this colony under nine months of freedom from seizures.

Report in the Comptes Rendues, dated August 1891, of the Hospice de l'Auliquaille. Of 231 epileptics admitted during six years, 12 were cured and 33 so improved as to be sent home; and amongst those remaining there were two men and four women who might be called cured, having been free from fits over three years, enabling it to be said that the cures were 7.7 per cent. and the ameliorated 15.10 per cent.

Report of the Craig Colony for Epileptics, Livingstone County, State of New York, 1897, gives a large number of records of improvement in individual cases, but does not state percentages. One case may be stated. Male, aged twenty-eight years. Admitted 5th February 1896. Epileptic twenty years. On admission, attacks were three to five daily; had to be assisted to and from his meals by two persons.

During the 1st month at the colony he had 110 seizures.

„	2nd	„	„	„	97	„
„	3rd	„	„	„	3	„
„	4th	„	„	„	0	„
„	5th	„	„	„	1	„

Then for seventeen months, up to date of Report, he had not had a seizure. He now works daily, alternating between the printing office and the field. It is not one or two things that keep this man free from seizures, but the combined action of the restorative and upbuilding influences that make up colony life. Nearly all the patients show marked physical improvement, 200 cases showing an aggregate gain in weight of 500 lbs.

Report of the Ohio Hospital for Epileptics for 1897 gives the number of recoveries as 16 per cent. on

the number of admissions, and states that thirty-one patients had been returned to their homes completely restored to health. Information from fifteen reported as cured in the former year (1895) shows that they have continued in good health, having had no symptoms of a recurrence of the malady. Of those remaining in the hospital, the attacks have in the majority of cases been greatly reduced in frequency and lessened in severity. The air of contentment pervading the institution indicates a gratifying improvement in the dispositions and tempers of the inmates.

Report of the Home for Epileptics, Mughull, near Liverpool, for year 1897, states that of 119 patients 11 per cent. had been free from attacks during the year, and that 8 per cent. had not exceeded ten attacks each for the year. The Report gives very satisfactory information regarding six women. Three of them had so far improved that they were appointed in succession to the post of paid cook at the Home. The first left to be married—has now a baby, and is doing well. The three other women are getting on well—two of them went to situations, one went home.

The Chorlton and Manchester Board of Guardians have combined for the purpose of dealing with their imbeciles and epileptics apart from their Workhouses. The Joint Committee, constituted under an Order of the Local Government Board, is now actively preparing for the erection of a Home Colony for 800 patients, which can be enlarged as may become necessary.

The returns for Mr Jenner-Fust's district gives the number of imbeciles and epileptics in special wards in the Lancashire Workhouses on 1st January 1898 as 2,931. (Of them about 600 will be sane epileptics.) I have not obtained the numbers for Cheshire.

I earnestly hope that this Conference, representing the Poor Law Unions of the two counties, will give an



emphatic expression of opinion that all pauper imbeciles and epileptics should be removed from the Workhouses and be dealt with in Home Colonies provided by the Unions.

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### DISCUSSION.

Alderman RADCLIFFE (Mayor of Blackburn) moved, "That in the opinion of this Conference the time has come when the Local Government Board should institute a general inquiry as to the best methods of dealing with imbecile and epileptic indoor poor, and that a deputation be appointed to wait upon the Board to request them to take steps to carry out the wishes of the Conference." He said that nobody who had devoted any attention to the question of the treatment of the insane could disagree with the papers. No words of his own were needed to recommend the resolution to the Conference. He hoped that a full and fruitful discussion would take place. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BALL (Wigan) seconded with great pleasure, as he thought that the sane epileptics should be kept away from the insane, and treated in a separate department. Nothing would more tend to their recovery. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JENNER-FUST (Local Government Board Inspector) said the cry for better classification extended not only to imbeciles and epileptics, but to many other classes with which Guardians had to deal. It was quite impossible for all the Unions individually to carry out any system of classification, many being too small for that purpose. Of the proposed methods of dealing with the imbeciles, one way which commended itself to many was to make the County Councils responsible for all imbeciles who could not be allowed to take their discharge from institutions because it would involve risk either to themselves or to others. Another plan was combination among the Unions to deal with this class. The County Councils were by no means anxious to undertake this work, and it was not only in Lancashire that complaints were heard of inadequate provision for imbeciles. Adverting to the provision of lunacy accommodation, he observed that the governing authority should have given an order not for one asylum, but for at least two or three. The alteration of an old house (Winwick Hall) for the accommodation of a few idiots seemed to him to be a very inadequate measure. (Hear, hear.) It seemed to him that in this matter it was a case of "Bumble to the rescue," and the Guardians must do what the County Councils had not done. Provision should be made for imbeciles and epileptics altogether independent of and at a distance from the Workhouse. In the first place, they had nothing to do with the Workhouse; and in the second place, if ever any scheme should come about handing

over these institutions for imbeciles and epileptics to the County Councils, they would be ready to be taken over by the new authority as they stood. It was only by combination that the majority of Unions could ever hope to deal with the matter, and he trusted that the example which had been set by Chorlton and Manchester would be followed by a further combination among the larger if not among the smaller Unions in the district. Cumberland and Westmorland were already considering this step for themselves. (Applause.)

Mr MIDDLEHURST (Prescot) said that it was about ten years since Dr Rhodes read a paper on the same subject at Chester. There was an appalling increase of insanity, and while he was anxious to see such cases treated in the best possible manner, the real question for consideration was how to stem the tide of lunacy in the country. A large number of cases should be treated in the Workhouses—temporary mental failure through overwork, or loss of relations, or of employment, and the like. The patients would get the rest and skilled attention they needed without the stigma of having been confined in an asylum. He knew of a young girl who broke down mentally through over-study in preparing for an examination, and was taken to an asylum for a few weeks. When she came out, people would not send their children to the school while she remained in it because she had been in an asylum, and she had to go away to get employment at £30 a year less than she had previously been earning. To take cases of that kind to the asylums was only to make the patients worse by further depressing them. (Hear, hear.)

Sir JOHN HIBBERT said he was delighted to see so many lady Guardians present. Perhaps some of them would express an opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

Lady O'HAGAN (Burnley) said there were many who had far more experience than herself, but none who were more deeply interested in the subject. The responsibility for the decision as to whether a patient was sent to the asylum or the Workhouse rested not with the Guardians, but, necessarily and properly, with the medical men, and those who certified the patient. It was highly essential to classify the cases carefully, and the feeble-minded might very well be sent to separate Homes, where they might be wholly or partially maintained by the Guardians. She was at present engaged in establishing classes for feeble-minded children in the elementary schools, and hoped that by scientific treatment of the children they might be able eventually to earn at any rate something towards their support. (Hear, hear.) She had pleasure in supporting the resolution, and hoped that speedy action would be taken to give effect to it. (Cheers.)

Mr ROBERT KILLIP (Toxteth) said that if they were to stay the progress of lunacy it must be by dealing with the young. Whilst drink might account in some measure for the increase of mental weakness and disease, the pressure of existence and the weakly constitutions of the children now being reared were great factors in the



increase of lunacy and imbecility. He would rather see an increase of outdoor poor than an increase of lunatics and imbeciles throughout the country. (Hear, hear.) He was no admirer of the White-chapel policy. (Hear, hear.) The Guardians gave a widow with five, six, or seven children, a paltry pittance of a shilling a head per week for rent, clothing, and food. If the woman was worthy to receive anything, she should be paid enough to maintain the home properly. If the same children were sent to Homes they would cost the Guardians six or seven shillings a week each. (Hear, hear.) He concluded with a complimentary reference to the Maghull Institution.

Sir JOHN HIBBERT said he regretted that the Asylums Board of Lancashire had not taken up the question of the imbecile and epileptic classes. He was very glad that there was a willingness on the part of the various Boards of Guardians to take up the question. With regard to Mr Killip's remark about relief for widows with families, he thought that in such a case as Mr Killip mentioned it would be better to take two or three of the children into the Workhouse schools until the mother could maintain them by her own exertions. (No, no.) He trusted that the Conference would appoint a deputation to carry out the resolution. (Hear, hear.)

A vote of thanks to Dr Rhodes and Alderman M'Dougall having been carried unanimously, there was a short interval for lunch.

On resuming, it was unanimously resolved that the following deputation should be appointed to bring the resolution of the morning to the notice of the authorities: Dr J. M. Rhodes, Alderman M'Dougall, the Rev. C. T. Royds (Chairman of the Lancashire Asylums Board), Mr John Whittaker (Burnley), and Mr H. J. Hagger (Honorary Secretary of the Conference), Liverpool.

Mr BRIDGE then read the following paper:—

## VAGRANCY AND THE WAY-TICKET SYSTEM.

BY REV. THOMAS BRIDGE,

*Chairman of the Board of Guardians, Macclesfield.*

### I. PREVALENCE OF VAGRANCY.

THE question I have to introduce to you for discussion is, "Is it desirable that the 'way-ticket' system of dealing with vagrants as carried out in Gloucestershire and other counties should be extended to the whole country?"

Of the prevalence of vagrancy we have irritating



reminders every day of our lives. The question propounded is simply a part of the subject of vagrancy, which itself is a part of the greater subject of pauperism, so that I do not magnify the importance of my subject. It is a small portion of a large problem that I take in hand.

Some think that vagrancy, as a part of the great English Poor Law system, occupies too prominent a position. It has been discussed in most Conferences, and many times at this Conference; nay, it has had the honour of having Conferences all to itself.

The reason is, that the social sore is so irritating. The numbers are not so large as many people imagine. The total number of persons relieved in the casual wards of the United Kingdom on the night of 1st January 1897 was 6,923. Many say that this number is about one-fourth, others one-fifth of the total number of habituels. This will give us an army of about 30,000, which really is not much for a population of 30,000,000—one in 1,000. Still the sore is constantly present, and you cannot forget it. How deeply it has bitten into the body politic is shown in our language, where we have choice epithets for all those who live on their fellows without recompense in work. Here are a few: Homeless poor, starveling, wayfarer, wanderer, tramp, vagabond, nomad, vagrant, wastrel, casual, mendicant, loafer, rogue, parasite, valiant beggar, human jackal, human vermin, filthy prowler, petty thief, locust eating all within his reach; but none is so strong as the French, “Tirer le Diable par la queue.” For humour, none beats the English casual, who, when asked what his trade was, said, “I’m a land surveyor;” and another in the same position, who said, “I’m a milestone inspector.”

## 2. DIFFICULTY OF DEALING WITH IT.

Oh, the poor vagrant! How are you to deal with him? You all know him, a man without power or will

to work, who rejoices in his unrestrained freedom; who says he cares for naught—hard fare or imprisonment are nothing to him—gaol, Workhouse infirmary, or casual ward are all the same to him. With hands in pocket, with slouching gait, he trudges along, happy, with only a red herring in his pocket. Of him it may be truly said, “*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*” (A penniless tramp will whistle in the face of a robber).

Any system of dealing with vagrants has this initial difficulty, that while you strive to give adequate help to the destitute through misfortune, you must not do anything to encourage the blood-suckers, who are by far the larger class. Out of thirty-nine whom I saw in one evening at our tramp wards, where I went with the avowed object of releasing the *bonâ-fide* workman without a task, I found only one, who was semi-paralysed, whom I resolved to relieve, and on inquiry he turned out to be an impostor. Out of twelve whom I saw admitted to the Gloucester wards, all had tickets, all were recognised by the taskmaster, and all had been there before. So you see that any measures against vagrants are liable to the two objections—

1. That the deserving wanderer is not properly relieved; or to the still stronger one—

2. That vagabondism is supported and encouraged.

Besides, vagrancy is a disease resulting from many causes, and he would be a charlatan indeed who would pretend that by one panacea he could heal a malady resulting from so many and varied causes, who would alter the character of a reservoir formed from many fountains by a single prescription or powder. I give you a classified list of the sources of vagrancy, which is not perfect, for, though dichotomous in its main divisions, many of the sub-divisions overlap. The causes of vagrancy might be given for any individual, as in a death certificate, primary, secondary, and in some cases tertiary as well.

## CAUSES.

## I. SUBJECTIVE.

A. *Preventible*.—Drink—Immorality—Laziness inherent—Vice—Crime—Temper and restlessness—Extravagance and improvidence.

B. *Non-preventible*.—Heredity—Temporary sickness—Old age—Physical incapacity—Mental incapacity.

## 2. OBJECTIVE.

A. *Economic*.—Pauper association—Early marriage and large families—Indiscriminate almsgiving—Lack of work—Trade misfortune—Density of population—Loss of husband or relatives—Loss of father or mother—Accident—Desertion—Ill-luck—Low wage—Miserable homes and surroundings.

B. *Cosmic*.—Climate and soil—Winter severity—Floods and storms—Earthquakes.

Who could heal by one cure a disease having so many origins?

I have here thirteen remedies for it, culled from all the doctors' prescriptions called in consultation.

## REMEDIES FOR IT.

1. Uniformity of treatment, diet, cells, work, detention.

2. Charges to be imperial.

3. Pell's Act to be enforced.

*Remedial.*

4. Tramps to be detained till they work.

5. Central Home for tramps.

6. Tramps to be sent to colonies.

7. To be taken to Workhouse like inmates.

*Repressive.*

8. To be handed over to police.

9. To punish givers to tramps.

10. Universal use of way-system.

11. Medical inspection of all tramps.



*Children.*

12. Prohibition of children tramps.

13. Unlimited detention of tramps' children by Guardians.

But altogether the best arranged remedies are given by Mr Whittaker in perhaps the ablest paper ever written on vagrancy, so well considered and studied, so lofty the standard set up, so practical is it in its deductions and recommendations.

Mr Whittaker's proposals are, and they will bear iteration—

1. To offer an extra meal of bread and cheese.
2. Acceptance of written evidence as to reason for casuals being on the road.
3. Stamped confirmation of same at each ward.
4. Extended powers of detention of all tramps without credentials.
5. Unlimited powers of detention of all juvenile tramps.
6. Uniformity of diet, and treatment, and detention.
7. Establishment of farm colonies as a disciplinary method of dealing with inveterates.

He puts them in the order of practicability and probable adoption, and you see the task committed to me embraces the inculcation of his first four recommendations. His judgment has been justified and his prophecy is in the way of being fulfilled.

### 3. HISTORY OF REPRESSION.

*Repression alone will not suppress it.*

Mendicancy was rife before the Reformation. The Church was unable to compete with it. Whilst unreflectingly bestowing relief, they increased the disease they attempted to cure. Hordes besieged the abbeys and monasteries, where relief was indiscriminately given, and so as early as 1388, in Richard II.'s reign, an Act was passed prohibiting vagrancy. Penalties of

extraordinary severity were passed against "sturdy vagabonds" and "valiant beggars," and these were increased by further Acts till at last there was a graduated scale of punishment—For the first offence, a public whipping, with all its horrors; second offence, loss of both ears; third offence, hanging.

These were as repressive as could be, and even for that rude age were considered barbarous, and were consequently ineffective.

What were people to do when the Church and men's conscience said "Give," and the law said "Don't give"? Was it logical to regard almsgiving as a work pleasing to God, and to treat alms-asking as a capital crime?

All through subsequent Poor Law legislation the keynote is repression.

One Act ordered vagrants to be branded or marked. Another (1572) enacted that any person who harboured a vagabond, whether marked or not, should be liable to a penalty of twenty shillings. Another fined the giver ten times the amount given. Even in 1713, a more humane period, there is a provision in an Act that vagabonds, before being sent back to their homes, shall "be stripped naked from the middle and openly whipped till his or her body be bloody."

And the Act of 1824, still in force, wants nothing in the form of severity.

What is the good of such repression when the public conscience won't stand it, magistrates won't sentence, and the rogues obtain and live on sympathy and help? All measures of repression will be abortive unless attended with some educational influence both of the public and the vagrants.

### *A good Vagrant System.*

The object of a good vagrant system should be not merely to scare from our counties and casual wards the loafers and wastrels who gather there, and drive them into other places where less severity is shown (this is

mere selfishness), but to aim at altering their lives and bring them into a brighter sphere of existence.

Too strict enforcement of the Vagrant Acts drives wanderers away more hardened and reckless than ever, and enlists sympathy on the side of the public, who are the readier to give, the harsher the beggars are treated, and find the food and assistance on which the beggar batten.

#### 4. HISTORY OF MOVEMENT.

The systems in vogue now for the repression of vagrants—

1. What is known as the *Cumberland System*. This is only a strict enforcement of the Vagrant Acts, the police acting as assistant relieving officers, and the magistrates agreeing to give at least fourteen days for every offence. This is the system prevalent in Lancashire and Cheshire. It has the advantage of bringing most vagrants under the eyes of the police, but the police are discouraged by finding a large percentage of the cases brought up by them “dismissed.” In Cumberland itself the system fell through. Bedford and Rutland seem to give uniform sentences.

2. *The Dorset System* is not simply repressive, it combines strictness with beneficence. By this system bread is supplied at bakers’ shops about five miles apart on the main roads in exchange for tickets given by subscribers to whom they are sent, or by non-subscribers who can buy them and distribute them. At the same time the Vagrant Acts are strictly enforced. It has been in force in Dorset, Hereford, Leicester, Northampton. It has generally failed, not from the system itself, but from its abuses. The bread found its way into the publicans’ pig-tubs.

3. *The Berkshire System* tries to guard against the abuses which might arise from the former. It provides bread depôts at police stations, and has a system of way-tickets by which a man must prove that he has



done a fair amount of walking towards his destination before he receives relief. It arranges that—

- (a.) Each man has a pass entitling to relief.
- (b.) Mid-day relief shall be at stations at police offices.
- (c.) Entry shall be made on ticket entitling him to relief, and so stopping necessity of begging.
- (d.) Arranging that a man should do a fair day's walk before eating.

### *Church Army Scheme*

for dealing with vagrancy by means of work-tickets, very similar to Pastor Von Bodelschevingh's in Germany.

Feeling that the casual ward is not the place for a genuine work-seeker, and urged on by the excellent success of Pastor Von Bodelschevingh, who started his scheme in Prussia for the purpose of preventing men seeking work from sinking to the rank of paupers, they started what they call the Lodging House Union, whereby they claim—

1. That the genuine work-seeker is prevented from mixing with criminals in low-class lodging houses, or from being degraded by having resort to a casual ward.
2. That the charity of the benevolent is limited to those deserving it.
3. That they are doing something to eliminate tramping as a profession.

Their means are—

To establish a chain of lodging-houses under the direct supervision of a Local Committee, and all working under one scheme.

To procure a labour shed, where the master supplies a task to every applicant coming with a work-ticket, each worth fourpence, in food or lodging.

Fourpenny work-tickets are sold to the public for a penny.

One and a half hour's work is required for each fourpenny ticket.

In addition to work-ticket, a tramp must hold a way-bill, which lasts for twenty-four days. This, with several stamps affixed, is a certificate of good conduct, and gives the tramp preference if he desires to enter a Home. It also aids him to obtain permanent work.

### 5. THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE SCHEME.

These details I have obtained through the kindness of Colonel Curtis Hayward, and as a result of a visit to the Gloucester casual wards.

(a.) The objects of the system are stated to be :—

1. To satisfy the public conscience that vagrants have a sufficient supply of food and decent lodging, supplied by public and organised sources, and thus check indiscriminate almsgiving, the chief inducement to professional vagrancy.
2. To strive to discriminate between real tramps and professional loafers, without being either unduly repressive or faddishly lenient.

(b.) The method adopted is :—

Relief offices are established along the principal roads in connection with police stations, where a vagrant receives a ration of bread on producing his ticket, and showing that he is travelling at a reasonable rate on the high-road which he avows leads from the point of starting to his stated destination.

There is the objection that for a *bonâ-fide* workman to apply to the police would imply that destitution is a crime ; but remembering that so few workmen would avail themselves of the ticket, and that so many of those who tramp would be the better for a little police

supervision, it seems, on the whole, for the public benefit that vagrants should come under the notice of the police.

Of course, for the successful working of the scheme it is essential that Masters of Unions should work in harmony with the police, and magistrates also.

(c.) Rules :—

On entering the first Union in the county or counties where this system is in force, a vagrant receives a pass or ticket from the assistant relieving officer or other person authorised to give admission orders for the casual ward, who records his description, the place he came from, and his final destination on the ticket.

The Master or his Deputy is to enter on this ticket the name of the next Union the vagrant is to go to in accordance with the statement of his final destination, and also the name of the relief station at which he may apply for his mid-day ration of bread, which can only be obtained at the station, and on the day named on the ticket.

The police apprehend all persons found begging or otherwise infringing the Vagrancy Act.

On conviction, the Justices are invited to send all vagrants to prison without exception.

The public are requested by circular not to give food or money to vagrants, and this is the kernel of the whole scheme.

(d.) Now let us see some of the results. This is from a report of the Vagrancy Committee of the Gloucester County Council, of 14th April 1898.

#### INCREASE OF VAGRANCY.

During the past quarter 11,585 casuals were admitted and 15,382 nights' lodging were given, against



10,293 admitted and 13,778 nights' lodging in the corresponding quarter of last year—an increase of 1,203 admissions and 1,604 nights' lodging. There was an increase in every Union except three. The increase is no doubt partly due to the railway works being executed in the county. In the March quarter last year 406 tickets to lodging-houses were given at Gloucester, and in the same quarter this year 1,076. Through the kindness of Mr Murray Browne, I am able to give statistics from four other counties :—

	1883.	1893.	1896.	1897.
Berks . . .	13,795	55,965	45,078	43,229
Oxford . . .	11,774	36,820	40,219	30,168
Bucks . . .	7,337	30,187	30,608	28,928
Warwick . . .	27,971	76,593	71,120	65,901
Gloucester . .	24,177	39,987	38,575	37,750
Wilts . . .	...	...	29,271	28,246

In reply to the Vice-Chairman, Colonel Curtis Hayward said the vagrancy showed a decrease in every county, but in Gloucester during the past quarter there was an increase.

#### IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING INDISCRIMINATE ALMSGIVING.

The next question to be asked is, what the “way-ticket system is expected to prevent? What causes are we striving to stop operating?”

According to many people the most fruitful of all active causes is indiscriminate charity.

This practice working on minds and bodies, restless, prone to wander, ever ready to feed and live on others' wealth, is enough in itself to produce an army of vagrants.

To fight against this you must convince people that the deserving poor have sufficient to keep body and soul together, that adequate food and decent lodging are provided for them. Let it be known that no

man need starve, you stop the supplies on which the vultures feed.

Nicholls, in his great work, says : “ As long as the people’s sympathies are excited by the appearance of want, so long will the charitably disposed be compelled to give. The best prevention of unreasoning benevolence will be found in the people’s being convinced that the really destitute are relieved and properly provided for at the public charge.”

And this the way-ticket system attempts to do.

Would that our old ladies, of both sexes, who give to beggars, ay, and our working people too, knew what true charity meant. Love means thoughtfulness and sacrifice for others, not self-gratification. True love is impulse wisely directed.

It is not love when it simply *pleases* you to give. You should think of the effect on the recipient of your alms. Will it do him good or not? Am I raising the man or adding to his degradation? Am I simply pleasing myself, and feeding vice and idleness, or am I regarding the welfare of the poor man?

It is calculated that four-fifths of the people who beg are impostors, and you are no match for them. Their life is to live on you—you haven’t the time to checkmate them.

Every profession is preyed upon by specially prepared beggars. The poor man has the everyday tramp; the lawyer has begging letters from decayed attorneys; the doctor has to attend hosts for nothing who could afford to pay him; the parsons don’t escape, for they have people calling upon them with religious difficulties, who don’t depart without a few shillings in their pockets as a proof of the efficacy of prayer.

Now if donors could be assured that every one could get sustenance and lodging when really needed, how much easier it would be to refuse? You see, then, how the authorities are justified in issuing such a placard as follows under the “ way-ticket ” system :—

## TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER.

A system for the relief of all destitute wayfarers is now in force throughout the county of Gloucester.

The wayfarer receives a ticket from the assistant relieving officer of the Union where he passes the night, and this ticket ensures him a ration of food at a certain place on the road he will travel the next day.

Food as well as lodging is also provided for vagrants, both night and morning, at every Union in the county.

The amount of work given at the Unions to destitute persons whose tickets show them to be travelling in search of work is very small. A larger task is only given to those who bring unsatisfactory tickets, or who have torn up their tickets, and who thus show that they are idle vagabonds.

The public are therefore earnestly requested not to give either food or money to beggars, as by so doing they encourage idle vagabond habits, and thus cause an increase of crime as well as of the burdens on the rates.

All destitute persons passing through the county are provided for by night at the Workhouse, and by day are supplied with food, administered under the direction of the police, at the relief stations.

## CONCLUSION, ADVOCATING "WAY-TICKETS."

I have thus tried to put before you one of the best systems of providing for the deserving indigent as well as repressing the professional vagrant. I ask you to support the proposal that some such system should be adopted throughout the country for these reasons:—

1. It would stop the system of squeezing out vagrants from one county or Union to another by augmenting restrictive measures.

2. It would be an instalment of the very necessary provision that all treatment of vagrants should be uniform throughout the country, as to diet, detention, and task-work.

3. It would give us a strong handle to work on the public conscience, so as to prevent kind-hearted but weak-minded men and women from giving alms without thought for the welfare of the recipients, thereby increasing the disease we strive to heal, and acting in a spirit not of "love with a sound mind and good conscience."



4. We should show to the world, that though we cannot by repression altogether extirpate the plague, we can relieve those who are genuine wayfarers seeking work, and show that no one in our land need starve, and that we do not rely, as our forefathers did, on repression alone.

These social questions are becoming year by year more and more important, and occupy the thoughts of some of the most important philosophers, Herbert Spencer, Professor Giddings, Tolstoi, Ibsen, Zola, Schopenhauer, Hartmann. And indeed we need thinkers as well as practical workers like yourselves.


And what is the line of thought of those thinkers about "abnormal man." Why, they think that recipients of charity, delinquents, tramps, parasites, the weak-minded and the insane, homeless children and juvenile offenders, should not undergo a treatment of punishment and confinement, but one of cure, and restoration to efficiency. This cannot be done by repression pure and simple, which has prevailed for four hundred years. It cannot be done by religious agencies, though they do much, or economic or philanthropic agencies. We have to appeal to the Government. We want this "way-ticket" system, a stepping stone to Mr Whittaker's full scheme of reforms so ardently to be wished, to be taken up by Government and made imperial. We are a long way from being able to do without a Government which alone can touch the lives of all within a given territory.

So, in answer to the question I asked at the begining of my paper, "Is it desirable, &c.," I answer emphatically "Yes."

Thereby you sufficiently restrain the semi-criminal habitual vagrant, and you reasonably help the deserving wayfarer on his search for work. You look after the deserving and unfortunate poor, you strive to maintain "the cause of the afflicted and the right of the needy."

[This part is retained by the Officer who first issues the Ticket]

PASS No.

Name 

Occupation

Age

Height

# Hair

# Eyes

Complexion

### Other distinguishing marks

Date of Arrival

Date of Departure

Going from

Final Destination

[SPECIMEN TICKET—FRONT SIDE]

## COUNTIES OF WILTS &amp; GLOUCESTER

PASS No. .... Union, ..... day of ..... 18

NAME..... Occupation.....

Age.....  
Height.....  
Hair.....  
Eyes.....  
Complexion.....

### *Other distinguishing Marks*

*Came from.....Final Destination*

[illegible]

# CASUAL WARD ADMISSION TICKET

ADMIT..... as described on the  
other side, who has been examined and registered by me.

[illegible]

*This Ticket must be kept, and must be presented to, and signed by the Relieving Officer of Vagrants, for each Union at which shelter is required.*



## DISCUSSION.

Asked whether the way-ticket system should be made obligatory?

Rev. THOS. BRIDGE said it could be carried out without legislation, and although it would be better if the Government would take the question of vagrancy in hand, the Local Authorities could do a great deal to repress vagrancy.

Mr LEECH (Rochdale) asked how long the Gloucestershire system had been in vogue, and whether it had put an end to vagrancy?

Rev. THOS. BRIDGE said he thought it had been in force for some years, but it had not put an end to vagrancy, and never would. (Laughter.)

Mr MOORSOM (Local Government Board Inspector) said they were all pretty well agreed as to the practical aspect of vagrancy, but there were many Guardians who did not think quite the same as those at that Conference. Up to the present time it had been quite impossible to get the Guardians of a district, to say nothing of a county, to agree on a system. Sometimes it seemed they differed simply because they wished to be unlike their neighbours. The system of repression, and occasionally of punishment, upon which they had acted for the last five hundred years, had proved an absolute failure. Vagrancy was a disease. The individual was not really responsible for it. It was a kind of weakness in the body politic. He believed very much in this way-ticket system, and that it would act as an indirect means of diminishing vagrancy. Vagrancy was a pleasant life, and if they in that room could become vagrants for twelve months, they would be averse to returning to their former routine. (Laughter.) Their great hope lay in getting hold of the children, especially by means of a good system of secondary education, so that the young might be properly controlled in the critical period between their thirteenth and twentieth year. (Hear, hear.)

A MEMBER urged that powers should be given to detain youthful tramps, and to compel them to try to earn an honest living.

Mr MEADOWS (Bucklow) said he was thoroughly in sympathy with the views expressed in the paper, and would like to see the way-ticket system generally adopted. The only objection was that it did not discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving poor. The honest seeker after work ought to be allowed to depart as soon as he had had breakfast. The greatest care must be exercised in dealing with the children, for there were plenty of worthless persons who would temporarily take to the road if they thought that the Guardians would then relieve them of the charge of their children. (Applause.)

Mr ROOKE (Manchester) said that fluctuations in the demand for labour were more frequent now than formerly, and were the explanation of a deal of vagrancy. It would be a great pity if Boards of Guardians placed any unnecessary restriction on the speedy

movement from town to town of those who were *bonâ fide* in search of employment. (Hear, hear.)

Mr WHOWELL (Bury) urged that the Guardians should be empowered to detain the children of vagrants. The way-ticket system should be tried, and the public should be informed that the vagrants were provided with food, and there would not then be quite so much support accorded to them. (Hear, hear.)

In response to the cordial invitation of the President,

Mr WHITTAKER (Burnley) said he agreed in the main with the paper ; but he believed that the best policy in regard to *bonâ fide* working men would be to pay their fares, and let them get to where there might be work in one day instead of in six or seven days. (Hear, hear.) They must discriminate between the honest working man and the loafer, and the latter they must make to work even if it took twelve months to make him. (Hear, hear.) The question of vagrancy was an important one, and it must be tackled in a resolute manner. There were not so many vagrants as was generally supposed, and the expense of an exhaustive system of combating vagrancy need not be at all prohibitive ; but the work must be thoroughly and patiently carried out. He regretted that he had not had an opportunity of reading Mr Bridge's paper, and that he must therefore be very brief upon it.

Rev. Father O'NEIL expressed the opinion that the majority of the tramps were those who had been born vagrants ; and that if the children of vagrants were compulsorily detained it would diminish by half the number of vagrants in the future. The cost would be heavy, and the adult tramps would be glad to get rid of the children, but the good results of the plan would be apparent in the future. (Hear, hear.)

Lady O'HAGAN said that they would never stop vagrancy unless they detained the children, and educated them in special institutions, and compelled the adults to work in industrial settlements. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. THOS. BRIDGE said there were many difficulties in taking the children from the tramps. Very many of the children who were "on the road" were not the children of the tramps, but had been cadged for the purpose of begging.

The PRESIDENT said he hoped that the paper would be seriously considered by every one present. The way-ticket system was in operation very successfully in many counties, but he did not think it would be advisable for the great counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, as represented at that Conference, to pass a resolution on the question without fuller opportunity of considering it. The way-ticket system tended to prevent begging, and to help the deserving wayfarer. Guardians should do all in their power to assist the deserving, but the adoption of a system such as way-tickets required due consideration. Perhaps Cheshire could make an experiment during the ensuing year, and then the Conference would have something

definite to consider next year. Vagrancy was a difficult problem which had troubled every one for two hundred years or more, but it was not, comparatively speaking, a question of much importance from a pecuniary point of view. Something might be done to check it by getting hold of the children and placing them in special institutions. It should be done at the expense of the State. Vagrancy was a national evil, and ought to be a national charge. He hoped that next year they might have a definite resolution on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

It was unanimously resolved that the three representatives of the District at the Central Conference Committee should be re-elected, viz. :—

Dr RHODES,

The Rev. Canon HIGNETT, and

Mr HAGGER (Hon. Sec. of the North-Western Conference).

With reference to the place of meeting in 1899,

Mr ROOKE (Manchester) stated that the Lord Mayor Elect had expressed a wish to be able to give the Conference a hearty welcome to the city of Manchester next year.

Rev. C. T. ROYDS moved that the Conference be held in Manchester next year.

This was carried unanimously.

Dr RHODES said that perhaps the members would follow the plan of the Continental Conferences, and pay a visit to some of the Poor Law Institutions. (Hear, hear.)

The proceedings were adjourned.

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The LORD MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL (Alderman John Houlding) presided in the evening, at the Town Hall, at a Civic Banquet to the Delegates.

The Council Chamber was adorned with flowers, and the hospitality was really of a princely character.

The toasts were "The Queen," "The Royal Family," "Success to the North-Western Conference," "The Right Hon. Sir John Hibbert, K.C.B.," and "The Lord Mayor of Liverpool."



SATURDAY, 1ST OCTOBER.

On Saturday morning,

Mr LEACH read his paper :—

IS THERE A CASE FOR RELAXING  
THE POWER CONTROLLING THE  
GUARDIANS IN THEIR ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE POOR LAWS?

By R. A. LEACH, Esq.,

*Clerk to the Rochdale Board of Guardians.*

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To deal with this question properly one feels at once called upon to give some particulars of the origin of the control which Guardians have to submit to in their administration of the Poor Laws, as well as of the Board, in whom from time to time that control has been vested.

To begin with, we must go straight to the Report of the Royal Commission appointed in 1832 to make a diligent and full inquiry into the practical operation of the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in England and Wales, and to report their opinion whether any and what alterations, amendments, or improvements might be made in the said Laws, or in the manner of administering them.

In the part of the Royal Commission's Report dealing with remedial measures much is stated in support of centralising the control of Poor Law administration as a safeguard against local maladministration. "No legislative exactments can in this department of administration," it is recorded in an analysis of this part of the Report, "be relied upon as self-acting, because they will be inefficiently executed or perverted from—

"1. The want of appropriate knowledge on the part of the distributors or annual officers.

“ 2. The short duration of their authority.

“ 3. The division of their authority.

“ 4. The inadequacy of their motives to support a correct administration.

“ 5. The strength of their interests in abusive administration ; and

“ 6. Intimidation on the part of the rate receivers.”

Consequent upon such findings the following recommendation was made by the Commissioners, viz :—“ We recommend, therefore, the appointment of a Central Board to control the administration of the Poor Laws, with such Assistant Commissioners as may be found requisite, and that the Commissioners be empowered and directed to frame and enforce regulations for the government of Workhouses, and as to the nature and amount of relief to be given and the labour to be exacted, and that such regulations shall, as far as may be practicable, be uniform throughout the country.” A further recommendation was made to the effect “ That the Central Board be empowered to cause any number of parishes which they may think convenient to be incorporated for the purpose of Workhouse management, and for providing new Workhouses where necessary. To declare their Workhouses to be common Workhouses of the Incorporated District, and to assign to those Workhouses separate classes of the poor, though composed of the poor of distinct parishes.”

The foregoing recommendations were given effect to by the Legislature in the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834 (4 & 5 Will. 4, c. 76), which so quickly followed the publication of the Report of the Commission, and ushered in the era of the new Poor Law.

Section 1 of the Act gave the Crown power to appoint three fit persons to be Commissioners to carry the Act into execution. They were to be styled (sect. 2) “ The Poor Law Commissioners for England and

Wales." These Commissioners were the first Central Board for the control of Poor Law administration, and having in mind the large powers vested in them for the control of Boards of Guardians, the new local authority, it is worthy of passing remark that section 10 enacted that from and after the expiration of the period of five years next after the day of the passing of the Act, and of the then next session of Parliament, so much of the Act as enabled the Crown to appoint Commissioners was to cease to operate or have any effect whatever.

Section 10 seems to suggest that the Legislature viewed central control in the administration of the Poor Law as an experiment to which only a very limited lease of life should be given for a start.

The existence of the Central Board, first under the name of "Poor Law Commissioners," and then under the name of the "Poor Law Board," was by divers Acts prolonged up to the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1867 (30 & 31 Vict., c. 106), when by section 1 of that Act it was finally established as a perpetual body.

In 1871 the Local Government Board came into existence, and took over the powers and duties of the Poor Law Board (as well as powers and duties of a different character from other departments), and so to-day we have in the Local Government Board the Central Board in line of succession to that Board which was first appointed under the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834.

The Local Government Board consists of the President, appointed by Her Majesty to hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure, and of the following *ex officio* members, viz. :—The Lord President of the Privy Council, all the principal Secretaries of State for the time being, the Lord Privy Seal, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The President and one of the Secretaries of the Board are capable of



being elected to the House of Commons, and it is common knowledge that the President and one of the Secretaries—the Parliamentary Secretary—do sit in Parliament, and are changed when there is a change of Government, and further, that the President is often a Cabinet Minister, as is the present holder of the office.

The members of the Local Government Board, with the exception of the President, being *ex officio* members, the Board is practically a one-man Board—the President is the Board. True, he has the assistance of his secretaries, assistant secretaries, inspectors, and a host of other officials.

Outsiders know little of the inner working of the Board. The Reports of the Local Government Board Inquiry Committee, over which the Right Hon. Sir John T. Hibbert is presiding, give, however, some light on the matter—at least enough light to dispel the fiction that everything done in the name of the Board is the work of permanent officials. To wit, in one of the said Reports, evidence is given about the difficulty of fixing the ingredients for making suet pudding for the inmates of a certain Workhouse. Mr Russell, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board, said, “The way we decided at the Local Government Board whether this pudding was right or not was, the President said he hated suet, I said I liked plenty of milk.” After this it would be wrong for any one to say that the control exercised by the Local Government Board is purely, simply, and arbitrarily control exercised by permanent officials, or that Cabinet Ministers despise “the day of small things.”

The Poor Law Act, 1834, having provided, as we have seen, for a Central Board, let us now see what were the powers of control actually given to the Board. For our purpose this is of far more importance than the constitution of the Board.

By section 15 of the said Act the Central Board is

authorised from time to time at discretion to make rules, orders, and regulations for—

1. The management of the poor.
2. The government of Workhouses, and the education of children therein.
3. The apprenticing of poor children; and
4. The guidance and control of all Guardians in the management of relief of the poor, and also with respect to accounts and contracts.

By the same section it is enacted that the Central Board may also, at discretion, suspend, alter, or rescind any such rules, orders, or regulations.

Section 15 alone makes the Central Board very powerful indeed. Just one limitation is laid down by the section in the direction of the exercise of unfettered judgment by the Guardians. It is this:—Nothing in the Act is to be construed as enabling the Central Board “to interfere in any individual case for the purpose of ordering relief.”

Section 46 of the Act makes it lawful for the Central Board to direct, at pleasure, Guardians to appoint such paid officers, with such qualifications as the Board thinks necessary for superintending or assisting in the administration of the relief and employment of the poor, and the Board is empowered to define, specify, and direct the execution of the duties of such officers. The section also gives the Board power to direct the mode of appointment, and to determine the continuance in office or dismissal of such officers, and also power to direct the amount and nature of the security to be given by officers, as well as to regulate the salaries payable to them, and the time and mode of payment. Under section 48 the Board may, either upon or without any suggestion or complaint in that behalf from the Guardians, remove any officer of the Guardians from office, for unfitness or incompetency to discharge the duties of his office, or who refuses or wilfully neglects to obey and carry

into effect the rules, orders, regulations, or bye-laws of the Central Board, and the Board may require the Guardians to appoint a fit and proper person in the room of any officer so removed.

By section 52 the Central Board are authorised to declare by rules, orders, or regulations, "to what extent and for what period the relief to be given to able-bodied persons or their families in any particular parish or Union may be administered out of the Workhouse by payments in money or in kind, or with food or clothing, in kind, or partly in kind and partly in money, and in what proportions, to what persons, or class of persons, at what times and places, on what conditions, and in what manner such outdoor relief may be afforded." It is also enacted that relief contrary to such orders or regulations is to be disallowed, subject to the saving for cases of emergency and of special circumstances, which are to be reported for the approval of the Central Board.

Other sections of the Act vest large powers in the Central Board with respect to the building, hiring, and enlargement and alteration of Workhouses, the uniting of parishes into Unions, the dissolving of Unions, and many other matters, &c. These provisions could not be given in detail in this paper only at wearying length. Suffice it to say that the Poor Law Act, 1834, gave those powers to the Central Board, which the Royal Commission referred to recommended should be given, and that these powers are now vested in the Local Government Board.

Since the Act of 1834, numerous Poor Law Acts of less moment than the 1834 Act have been passed, and under them Guardians have obtained certain powers and privileges; but an examination of these additional statutes would show that the exercise of such powers and privileges by the Guardians must be exercised under the control of the Central Board. It is not going beyond the mark to state that the local



administrators of the Poor Law are held in the hollow of the hand of the central authority, and that it is within the hollow of that hand that local administrators live and move and have their being.

Taking the provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, it is clear that the Central Board has always had power to make rules, orders, and regulations allowing Guardians a large amount of liberty in local administration, and the same may be said with respect to the subsequent Acts. Has the Central Board in the rules, orders, and regulations that have been issued, or by its determinations in other ways, allowed Guardians the "maximum" or the "minimum" of liberty? This is an important question, the answer to which is largely the "Yea" or the "Nay" to the question—"Is there a case for relaxing the powers controlling the Guardians in their administration of the Poor Laws?" Let us see under the following heads:—

1. Control of the Guardians in dealing with the indoor poor.
2. Control of the Guardians in dealing with the outdoor poor.
3. Control of the Guardians in dealing with officers.
4. Control of the Guardians in the exercise of legalised privileges and control by audit.

#### I. CONTROL OF THE GUARDIANS IN DEALING WITH THE INDOOR POOR.

Putting aside the question of Workhouse buildings, and taking simply that of the government of the Workhouse, so far as the pauper inmates themselves go, we find (General Consolidated Order, 24th July 1847) that the classification, discipline, and diet of the pauper inmates are, with little exception, all cut and dried down to the most minute particular. Anyhow, apart from the leave of absence to inmates, visits of friends,

and actual discharge, Guardians find that there is allowed to them little or no discretion in dealing with the indoor poor. Even the times at which the inmates of the Workhouse—save the sick, infirm, and young children—shall rise, be set to work, leave off work, and go to bed are prescribed, and the Guardians are not able to alter the time-table given in the General Consolidated Order in any particular without the sanction of the Local Government Board. In the name of all that is reasonable, why, for instance, should not Guardians be at liberty to say that all the adult inmates of the Workhouse shall have the privilege of staying up for a quarter of an hour or so beyond eight o'clock, which is the time set down in the table mentioned as bed-time, without being under the necessity to apply for the consent of the Board at Whitehall to that odd quarter of an hour?

Take the question of clothing. The public would be amazed if told that the Guardians are not permitted to allow any inmate of the Workhouse to wear his or her own clothing while in the Workhouse, no matter how good or clean those clothes may be, no matter how deserving of sympathy the inmate may be, and no matter if there are resources available for the repayment to the rates of the whole cost of the inmate's maintenance and for the renewal of clothing. And yet this is so. (General Consolidated Order.)

Or take the question of dietary. A great deal has been said during the last few months of avoidable waste of food in the Workhouses. A Departmental Committee has had the matter under consideration, and has published a report, which is a most entertaining document. In it the Committee say—"We think it right to record that the evidence satisfies us that some of the waste of which complaints have been made has been due to carelessness rather than to the fixed ration system." Whoever reads the report will come to the conclusion, however, that the larger

amount of the waste has arisen through the "fixed ration system," a system which the Central Board by the General Consolidated Order has fixed, and which the Guardians have no right to depart from, although some venturesome Guardians, taking the law into their own hands, have done so.

On the matter of dietaries, it is only fair, perhaps, to admit that under the "Allowance of Tea, &c., Order of the 8th March 1894," the Guardians are given absolute discretion to cause "dry tea with sugar and milk to be supplied to such of the female inmates of the Workhouse as they may consider should be supplied with the same," but this liberty is checkmated by the fact that if dry tea with sugar and milk is so supplied, it has to be in addition to the tea prescribed by the fixed dietary in force at the Workhouse. In other words, the Guardians are so controlled by the Central Authority that they may not give the former in substitution for the latter. It would be reasonable that they should, but central control does not allow it.

Other points in connection with the control of the Guardians in dealing with the indoor poor might be named in making out a case for relaxing the powers controlling Guardians, but those named, it is submitted, are sufficient for indicating how severe the control is.

## 2. CONTROL IN DEALING WITH THE OUTDOOR POOR.

Outdoor relief may be given only in accordance with the regulations of the Central Board. There are two General Orders containing regulations, viz., the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of the 21st December 1844, which is in force chiefly in Agricultural Unions, and the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order of the 14th December 1852, which with one or two exceptions is in force in all the Unions of the North-Western District as it is generally throughout the Urban Unions of the country.

The chief features of the two orders relate to the



relief of the able-bodied and their families. Under the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order, Guardians are only permitted to relieve in the Workhouse the able-bodied man, or woman, together with such of the family of every such able-bodied person as may be resident with him or her, that is, the Guardians may not give such persons outdoor relief. Under the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, the Guardians may give outdoor relief to able-bodied unemployed men, married or single, with or without families, but if they do so one-half of the relief at least is to be given in articles of food or fuel, or in other articles of absolute necessity, and each man is to be kept at a task of work so long as he continues to receive relief.

Both Orders certainly allow Guardians latitude in cases of sudden and urgent necessity, and cases specially circumstanced. And, as required by the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, if there be a case outside the exceptions named in either Orders, it is provided that the Guardians may relieve in the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order Unions the able-bodied with outdoor relief, or in the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order Unions able-bodied men with outdoor relief, without setting such men to task-work. Still, when they do so, they must, within the prescribed number of days, report the case, with the grounds of dealing with it exceptionally, to the Local Government Board for approval. If the Board approves what has been done, then the relief granted in the particular instance, if otherwise lawful, is not to be deemed unlawful. Otherwise it is. The necessity of this report for the approval in each particular instance of itself indicates the strength of the control that exists over Guardians in the matter of outdoor relief to the able-bodied and their families. Apart from such provisions for individual cases, in neither Order is there any latitude allowed to Guardians for periods of exceptional distress.

Both Orders make it illegal to allow as a loan what

may not be given right out as relief, while by the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order it is unlawful to either directly or indirectly establish any applicant for relief in trade or business, or to redeem from pawn for any such applicant any tools, implements, or other articles, or to purchase and give to any applicant any tools, implements, or other articles except clothing, or bedding urgently needed.

Assuming that if Guardians should be controlled in one thing more than another, it is in the matter of the giving of outdoor relief, is it reasonable that during periods of exceptional distress every particular case, in which the Guardians conceive that they have good grounds for departing from the prescribed way of dealing with cases in ordinary times, should have to be reported to the Central Board for approval?

Again, why should Guardians, where they may legally give outdoor relief to able-bodied men and their families, be tied up to give in every case, without regard to the character of the applicant, not more than half of the relief in money? And is not control carried to unreasonable length when Guardians are prevented from redeeming under any circumstances anything from pawn for an applicant, or from giving relief by purchase of a hawker's license, or from starting an orphan child, who has been brought up and trained at the expense of the rates, with the necessary tools and implements for earning an independent living. A case of this kind has occurred within the last few weeks. The Guardians of a certain Union wished to give a girl, who had been taught dressmaking while under their care, a start in the world by buying her a sewing machine. The Local Government Board refused to allow the necessary expenditure. To say the least, it seems ridiculous that the Guardians in such a case may, of course, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, spend £10 in emigration of the child to Canada, but may not spend half that amount in providing the

child with business tools for earning an honest living in the land of her birth, after having had her trained for the business.

### 3. CONTROL OF GUARDIANS IN DEALING WITH OFFICERS.

Many Guardians feel that, if a case exists for relaxing the powers controlling them, it is in respect to their officers. All officers are under the protecting wing of the Central Board, save for the exceptions and qualifications named below. The Guardians are required (General Consolidated Order) to appoint fit persons to the offices named by the Central Board, and to obtain the Board's sanction to each appointment. They must pay the several officers such salaries as the Board may direct or approve. The officers so appointed are to discharge the duties prescribed by the Central Board, and are to continue to hold office until death or resignation, or until removed by the Board, or until proved insane to the satisfaction of the Board.

The exceptions and qualifications referred to are as follows :—(1) The Guardians may dismiss porters and nurses (other than the superintendent nurse), and assistants and servants, without the consent of the Central Board (General Consolidated Order); and (2) The Guardians may employ such persons as they shall deem requisite in or about the Workhouse or Workhouse premises, or on the land occupied for the employment of the pauper inmates of the Workhouse, or otherwise, in or about the relief of the indoor poor, upon such terms and conditions as shall appear to them to be suitable. That means in such cases no sanction of the Central Board is required to the appointment, the salary, or to the dismissal. There are other minor provisions, but they need not be particularised here.

While Guardians may adduce strong grounds for having absolute power as regards all officers, whether



principals or subordinates, and while officers, whose duties are prescribed by the Central Board under pains and penalties for wilful disobedience, may produce very strong grounds for being kept under the protection of the Central Board—grounds which led the Select Committee of 1864 on Poor Law Relief to report in favour of the Central Board retaining its control of the protection of officers—both sides must admit to anomalies which go to show that if the Central Board is not to withdraw some of the power Guardians already have, they should give to them some powers which they have not.

Two instances of such anomalies may be given. First, the Church of England Workhouse Chaplain, because appointed under the terms of the General Consolidated Order, is under the protection of the Central Board as regards tenure of office, salary, and other matters. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Workhouse Chaplain, and the Protestant Dissenters' Workhouse Chaplain—each termed Chaplain by courtesy, though styled Religious Instructors in official records—because appointed under the "Assistant Officers' Order," have none of that protection. Yet in all three cases the duties are of equal importance, and are of the same kind.

The other instance is this: Nurses for the Workhouse Infirmary may only be appointed with the sanction of the Central Board. On the other hand, Guardians may appoint as they please attendants for the Workhouse Lunacy Wards. Surely the appointment of an attendant on the insane is quite as important a matter as the appointment of a nurse.

The power of the Guardians with respect to officers generally is a power which cuts two ways. While it is limited so as (except in the cases mentioned) to prevent them from dismissing officers at pleasure, and from reducing salaries, it is also limited as to prevent Guardians doing for officers what they would do were

they not prevented by the Central Board. It is said that the Central Board always approves increases of salary. That saying is not true. The Central Board had often disallowed an increase of an officer's salary, and has disallowed other provisions for officers which Guardians have been ready to make. A short time ago the Guardians of the Bradford Union furnished the officer's recreation room at the Workhouse with a billiard table for the use of the indoor officers. The auditor disallowed the payment. The Guardians appealed to the Central Board against the disallowance. The Board upheld the auditor. More than this, the Board expressed the opinion that the table should be sold by the Guardians as soon as possible, and the proceeds paid over to the treasurer, and in the meantime deferred their decision as to exercising their equitable jurisdiction to remit the amount disallowed or any part of it. This is control with a vengeance, or nothing is.

#### 4. CONTROL OF THE GUARDIANS IN THE EXERCISE OF LEGALISED PRIVILEGES, AND CONTROL BY AUDIT.

Here we get a very broad field. Two or three things picked out of it give a fair sample of the whole.

*Poor Law Conferences.*—The Conference Act of 1882 legalised the payment by Guardians of the reasonable expenses of their representatives attending the District or Central Conference, and for reports of such Conferences, but subject to the ever extending control of the Central Board. The Act does not limit the number of representatives that may attend. The General Order of the Local Government Board does, and makes the difference so far as the Central Conference in London goes between Unions inside the fifty miles radius of London and those outside, that while each Union inside may send three Guardians and

the Clerk, each Union outside may only send two and the Clerk, and up to a recent amending order, only one and the Clerk. And yet in Lancashire there are Unions with as grave responsibilities as any Unions in London.

It has been held that a reasonable charge for admission to a Poor Law Conference is a legal charge. One of the auditors fixed 10s. as a reasonable charge for the admission of four representatives to a two days' District Conference, or 1s. 3d. per person per day. He was upheld in the matter by the Local Government Board.

*Visiting Patients in Lunatic Asylums.* — The Lunacy Act, 1890, incorporating a provision of the Lunacy Act, 1853, empowers Guardians of any Union, whenever they see fit, to visit and examine any pauper lunatic chargeable to their Union, confined in any institution for lunatics. This is a legal privilege, and intended as a safeguard in the interests of patients compulsorily detained. It is one appreciated by the patients and their friends, and valued by the Guardians. The statute does not limit the number of Guardians to any one visit, nor does it give the Local Government Board power to make regulations in the matter, which may be accounted for by the fact that lunacy legislation is framed by another department. Notwithstanding this, the Local Government Board, in dealing with appeals against disallowances by the auditor, has upheld the auditor in fixing the number of Guardians who may, at the expense of the rates, visit pauper patients in the Asylums, and also the auditor's contention that 5s. is sufficient subsistence allowance for any Guardian who has to take a full day in visiting patients in a distant Asylum.

On this matter of allowance for subsistence, it may be pointed out that what is considered reasonable expenses for Guardians is less in amount than the Central Board considers reasonable for the auditor. Control



and inequality like this is irritating and maddening to reasonable minds, especially so when it is found that the auditors' standard of reasonableness varies with the auditors, so that what is allowed in one Union is disallowed in another. The abolition of the audit system is not likely to find any advocates, but it is about time that auditors were confined to matters of legality, leaving the question of reasonableness to the judgment of the persons who are elected by and who are responsible to the people who have to find the money.

*Poor Law Loans.*—The Poor Law Act, 1897, enacts that loans raised by Guardians shall be repaid within such period, not exceeding sixty years, as the Guardians may, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, determine. And what has the Board determined? In face of argument and entreaty by letters and deputations, the Board has determined that as regards loans for new buildings no sanction shall be given for one year beyond the old maximum period of thirty years. Why? The Board's answer is that it is trustee for the protection of the interests of the next generation. Well, Guardians are trustees for the protection of the interests of the present generation. If the principles of equity demand that this generation shall not be eased at the expense of the next, those principles being equally sided demand that the next generation shall not be eased at the expense of this; and for the Local Government Board to insist, as it is insisting by imposing its control to limit loans to thirty years for buildings of the class it now requires to be erected, is to insist to the grave injustice of the present generation, that the next generation shall come into possession of indoor establishments which will last through that generation without having to pay one penny piece towards the original cost of erection.

Need more be said to make it clear that the Guardians are so controlled in the administration of the Poor Law as to be left with the minimum of liberty,

and that there is a case for relaxing the powers controlling them.

For the sake of convenience in discussion, the following grounds are submitted in proof that there is a case as named :—

(1.) That the present control is based on recommendations made sixty-five years ago on evidence of conditions then existing, many of which have since been largely removed.

(2.) That the control to some extent was originally only intended as a safeguard against corruption and maladministration of a sort that public opinion in these days will not tolerate, and to that extent at least it is no longer justifiable.

(3.) That the control which Guardians have to submit to is much more severe than any other representative Board or Council charged with the administration of local affairs have to submit to, and that while there may be found reasons why Poor Law administration, as a matter of national moment, should be guided more or less by a Central Board, no just grounds can be found for maintaining the existing severity of control.

(4.) That the present system entails an unreasonable amount of correspondence between the Central Board and the Guardians.

(5.) That the Guardians should have powers more in proportion to the liability of the ratepayers to pay for the local administration than is the case at present.

(6.) That the efficiency in the local administration of the Poor Law, as in all branches of local government, depends more upon the intelligence and integrity of those who are entrusted by the electors with such administration, and visits from the inspectors, than it does upon central control as prescribed in General and Special Orders.

(7.) That the practice of the Local Government Board in issuing Orders, Rules, and Regulations, having the force of statutes in Poor Law matters,

without Guardians being first given an opportunity to approve or disapprove of the proposals of the Board, is arbitrary and out of keeping with the spirit of the age.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the Local Government Board Inquiry Committee has, in its report of June last, advised that the Central Board should divest itself of such powers of control as it may consider expedient to do, where it can do so without fresh legislation. But should the Local Government Board, it may be asked, be left to say what power it shall divest itself of? Should it be left to the Guardians to say? The unbiassed would answer that it should be left to neither one nor the other, but that it should be left to an absolutely independent tribunal, having ample powers to go fully into so controversial a subject, and to make recommendations thereon. Before such a tribunal all parties concerned might lay their views; and no doubt, by such a course being followed, conclusions would be come to and recommendations made which would be as safe to act upon as were the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of 1832 on the condition of things then existing. The subject goes beyond the question: What control shall the Central Board divest itself of by its own orders? It includes all that, and this besides: What power to control shall be taken from the Central Board by statute?

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### DISCUSSION.

The PRESIDENT said Mr Leach's paper was an admirable one, and the seven reasons given at the end of the paper were excellent, and he did not see why they should not be adopted and sent to the Local Government Board. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HARRIGAN (Liverpool) said the paper contained a fund of information, and touched on a variety of points, all of which he had at various times felt the force of. Delay had always been one of the greatest characteristics of the Local Government Board. It took about a year to get a reply to such a thing as a request that, for some



reason, an inmate might stop up a quarter of an hour after the regulation bed-time. (Laughter.) The Local Government Board was a one-man Board, and that one man was, as far as the Guardians were concerned, the Inspector. The paper would be very useful, especially to newly-elected Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Dr RHODES (Chorlton) proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Leach for the excellent paper he had just read. There used to be an old saying about Rob Roy that he was too bad for blessing and too good for banning, and much the same might be said about the Local Government Board. The Local Government Board made mistakes, like other authorities, and it should recognise that things have changed since 1834. At that time the Guardians did not allow reporters to be present, but now their meetings were fully reported in the papers, and the ratepayers knew exactly what was being done, so that the Local Government Board ought to allow the Guardians a little more discretion. (Hear, hear.) The more power that was entrusted to Guardians, the better would be the class of men who would be willing to act as Guardians; and if the Orders were sent in draft to the Guardians for recommendations and criticism, there would be greater harmony in the relations of the Local Government Board and the Guardians. (Hear, hear.) The present system of surcharging should be altered, not one per cent. of the present surcharges being confirmed by the Board. Suggestions for a surcharge should be first sent to the Local Government Board, and that authority could then, if necessary, sanction it. The hundreds of unsustained surcharges created much friction between Guardians and the Local Government Board. They could not, however, do without the Local Government Board, who collected a great deal of useful information, and they would never have had the improvements in nursing but for the Local Government Board. (Cheers.) The Local Government Board was also useful in protecting officials, for there were still many Boards of Guardians who did not do their duty to their officers. If the Local Government Board would give more power to the Inspectors, and keep fewer in London, where they did not know much about Guardians, there would be greater harmony between the Local Government Board and the Guardians. (Cheers.)

Mr ORMROD (Preston) said that the Local Government Board had done invaluable work in improving the nursing arrangements. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JENNER-FUST (Local Government Board Inspector) said it was very pleasant to find that there was no real feeling of antagonism between the Guardians and the Local Government Board. (Hear, hear.) The feeling evidently was that the influence of the Board was very good, and that it was a pity it was not just a little better, and also that the authority of the Inspector was beneficial and should be increased. (Hear, hear.) The first point in Mr Leach's paper that he disagreed with was, that the classification, dietary, &c., were cut and dried. He did not think that any one would wish to classify

on lines differing much from those laid down in the General Consolidated Orders of the Local Government Board. Then, as to the diet, the medical officers had absolute control as regarded the sick, and as regards the general body of inmates the dietary was prepared by the Guardians themselves in consultation with the medical officer, and very rarely objected to by the Local Government Board. The remedy for waste was in the Guardians' own hands. Then there was the complaint that paupers could not wear their own clothes. He knew of a Board that made the experiment, and some of the inmates were at once supplied with clothes that almost made the Chairman of the Board in his frock coat and tall hat afraid of comparison. (Laughter.) It was an anomaly that the sanction of the Local Government Board should be required for nurses and not for lunatic ward attendants. His remedy would be to make it necessary for the Local Government Board to sanction both those appointments. The register in London was most useful, especially as Guardians were not always so careful as they should be as to whom they appointed. In regard to officers who had to deal with the lives and comfort of men and women, there was, rightly, hesitation in relaxing any control. Another complaint was that the Orders were not sent round to the Guardians for their comments before being issued by the Local Government Board. It had not been easy to consult 650 Unions in the past, but now there was a Poor Law Unions Association it would be more possible than hitherto. He disagreed with the suggestion that they should refer questions between the Local Government Board and the Guardians to an independent tribunal who could not possibly know much about the details of Poor Law work. If the Guardians claimed exclusive control over the officers, it would be only right that they should pay them, but at present they received a grant in proportion to the number of officers employed. The Local Government had no particular love for interfering with reference to the most minute details, and if the Guardians were all as good as the best the restrictions might be considerably relaxed. When they compared the amount of control exercised over Guardians with that exercised over the County Councils, they must remember that the one had to deal with human beings and the other mainly with things, a considerable difference. (Hear, hear.)

Mr TRAVIS (Ormskirk) considered that the procedure adopted by the Board of Trade in regard to the regulations for the supply of electricity might be very well copied by the Local Government Board, and that before making Orders they should be sent to the various Boards for their suggestions.

Mr HORN (Burnley) said there was one point in Mr Leach's paper that had not been mentioned, and that was the period of repayment of loans in respect of buildings. It was thirty years, and a great many were now agitating for the extension of the period, on the ground that the entire expense should not be borne by the present generation. He believed that if the period was extended it would



tend to extravagance. Thirty years was sufficient in respect of buildings.

Mr KILLIP (Toxteth) said he hoped that the day would never come when the Guardians would have as much liberty of action as the municipal authorities. As to clothing, he thought that where an inmate possessed good flannel underclothing he might be allowed to wear it. He would be glad if the Local Government Board would send a circular letter, as they did in January 1895, advising Guardians how to make their visits to the Workhouse in such a way as to give the inmates an opportunity of expressing their wishes without the fear of the officers before their eyes. (Hear, hear.) If an officer dogged their footsteps from ward to ward, why, they must tell him to depart in peace and be quick about it. (Laughter and applause.)

Lady O'HAGAN said she could not imagine anything more dangerous than to allow inmates of Workhouses to wear their own clothing, which might have been contaminated with infection in the squalid places from which they had come. The Local Government Board was invaluable in securing uniformity of treatment of the paupers throughout the country; and in preventing the possibility of influence being brought to bear on the Guardians at election times causing them to make promises that they could not carry out. (Hear, hear.) The School Boards were subject to an even greater amount of control than the Guardians. Uniformity was the great thing in the administration of the Poor Law. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HODGSON (Ulverston) said he could re-echo a remark of the Lord Mayor's at the banquet the previous evening, "Thank God, we have a Local Government Board." Though they might think that the Local Government Board was a little hard on them at times, the assistance rendered by the Inspectors was of incalculable benefit to the Guardians. While they had such Inspectors as Mr Jenner-Fust and Mr Moorsom they could not grumble much about the Board. (Cheers.)

Mr LEACH said he did not suggest that the Local Government Board should be abolished, but that the Guardians should be allowed more liberty in the exercise of their reasonable discretion. The history of the nursing reform and every other advance showed that it was the Guardians, and not the Local Government Board, who initiated the movement. (Cheers.) The more power that Guardians were allowed the better would be the men and women who would be willing to act in that capacity. (Hear, hear.)

The PRESIDENT moved a vote of thanks to Mr Leach for his paper. He said that he gathered from the discussion that Guardians had a fondness for their old grandmother the Local Government Board who sat in Whitehall. There was no doubt a great deal of good in the control exercised by the Local Government Board, but it was established in 1834, and it must be altered to meet the different conditions prevailing in the present day. He had a strong opinion that the time had come when the control might be relaxed,



and he had had some experience, having been twice Secretary of the Local Government Board. A vast quantity of correspondence might be avoided if fuller powers were given to the Local Government Board Inspectors, and he would have been glad if the Conference could have made some recommendation in that direction. As to the Orders, he quite agreed that it was not easy to ascertain the views of 650 Boards of Guardians, but the Inspectors might assist in the work, and great good would be done by that means. He hoped that the time would come when they would have more satisfactory relations between the Guardians and the Local Government Board. (Hear, hear.)

The vote of thanks was carried unanimously.

Mrs HOLLAND (Ormskirk) proposed a resolution expressing regret at the severance of Miss Mason's connection with the North-Western District.

This was unanimously agreed to, the PRESIDENT remarking that Miss Mason was an excellent official, and had done very good work indeed in regard to the boarded-out children. (Cheers.)

Mr WHITTAKER said he had the great honour of moving a hearty vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool for the loan of St George's Hall for the Conference; and especially to his Lordship for his generous hospitality and the personal interest he had always taken in the Conference. (Cheers.)

Mr ROOKE (Manchester) seconded the proposition, which was carried amid loud applause.

The PRESIDENT said he had a duty to perform, to move a hearty vote of thanks to their Honorary Secretary, Mr Hagger, who had held office for many years, and the success which had attended that Conference had been largely due to Mr Hagger's admirable arrangements for the meetings. (Cheers.) They were especially fortunate to have such a gentleman undertaking the office of Hon. Secretary. He trusted Mr Hagger would long give his services to the Conference. (Cheers.) All the members would second that proposition.

The vote of thanks to the Hon. Secretary having been carried with enthusiasm,

Mr HAGGER thanked the President and members for their appreciation of his services. So long as he gave them satisfaction he would continue to do the work. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. C. T. ROYDS (Lancaster) moved a cordial vote of thanks to the President, who had taken the chair at their Conferences from the beginning of the movement. The Conferences there and throughout the country had been of the greatest benefit to the whole nation, in leading to economical and judicious administration and the amelioration of the condition of the poor. Sir John Hibbert's energy and ability had done a great deal to make the Conferences useful and popular. The thanks not only of the Conference but of the general public were due to the President. (Cheers.)

The motion was carried with acclamation.

The PRESIDENT, who was enthusiastically cheered, said he had to

thank Mr Royds for his very kind and too flattering remarks about him. His heart had been in the work, and was in it still. He was very glad to think that the twenty-fourth Conference was, if anything, more successful than those in the past. He trusted that the Conferences would continue in years to come doing a great and important work for the public. There was no authority in the country had more important duties to perform than the Poor Law Guardians, and their usefulness was recognised by everybody. He hoped that success might attend their efforts, and that every Guardian in the forty-two Unions of Lancashire and Cheshire might have health and strength to carry out the work in the ensuing year. (Prolonged cheers.)

The proceedings then terminated.

## North Midland District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TENTH NORTH MIDLAND DISTRICT POOR LAW CONFERENCE FOR THE COUNTIES OF DERBY, LEICESTER, LINCOLN, NOTTINGHAM, AND RUTLAND, HELD IN THE POOR LAW OFFICES, POCKLINGTON'S WALK, LEICESTER, ON THURSDAY, 27TH OCTOBER 1898.

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SIR WALTER FOSTER, M.P., PRESIDING.

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference :—

### DERBYSHIRE (9 Unions).

#### BAKEWELL—

Clay, Alfred.  
Hawes, Alfred (Clerk).  
Slack, Edward.

#### BELPER—

Dexter, John.

#### CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH—

Nall, Dr Joseph.

#### CHESTERFIELD—

Waddington, Booth.  
Haslam, James.

#### DERBY—

Rolfe, Rev. H. R. (Vice-Chairman).  
Ellis, Ephraim C.

#### SHARDLOW.

Canner, E. (Chairman).  
Bennett, W. P.  
Stevenson, L.

### LEICESTERSHIRE (11 Unions).

#### ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH—

Denton, Rev. Canon (Chairman).

#### ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH—*continued.*

Joyce, J. H.  
Pratt, Mrs.

#### BARROW-ON-SOAR—

Bosworth, James.  
Stevenson, Robert P.  
Scott, J. J. F. (Clerk).

#### BILLESDON—

Bates, Rev. A. N.  
Haycock, E.  
Richardson, W. E. (Clerk).

#### BLABY—

Pick, J. B. (Vice-Chairman).  
Pochin, John (Non-Delegate).

#### HINCKLEY—

Bush, Rev. E. (Vice-Chairman).  
Titley, Rev. R.  
Biggs, George.

#### LEICESTER—

Andrew, A. (Chairman).  
Shaw, G.  
Stanion, O. B. } (Vice-Chairmen).  
Mansfield, H. (Clerk).



Unions represented at the Conference—*continued*.

LOUGHBOROUGH—

Moss, John.  
De Lisle, Edwin.

LUTTERWORTH—

Toone, J. Parker.  
Corbet-Smith, Major.  
M'Kenzie-Cott, Rev. A.  
Bodyede, T. C. (Clerk).

MARKET-HARBOROUGH—

Danby, Rev. C. E. (Chairman).  
Pulteney, Rev. A. W.  
Underwood, F.  
Burgoine, C. (Clerk).

MELTON MOWBRAY—

Wells, Geo. S. (Chairman).  
Glover, Josiah (Vice-Chairman).

LINCOLNSHIRE (15 Unions).

GRIMSBY—

Southworth, Wm. (Chairman).  
Wright, John Cooke (Vice-Chairman).  
Cook, Markham.  
Watson, W. H. (Assistant-Clerk).

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE (8 Unions)

BASFORD—

Briggs, E.  
Roberts, W.  
Smith, W.  
Spencer, C. J. (Clerk).

MANSFIELD—

Mullins, Rev. E. H.

NOTTINGHAM—

Lees, John.  
Howard, G. M. (Clerk).

SOUTHWELL—

Campbell, Rev. John.  
Whiston, R. N.  
Kirkland, G. E. (Clerk).

WORKSOP—

Emmerson, Geo.  
Highfield, Fuller P.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

BURTON-ON-TRENT.

Fairclough, Rev. W. H. H.  
Thompson, F.

VISITORS.

Arthur Wakerley, Esq., Mayor of Leicester.  
Henry Stevens, Esq., Local Government Board Inspector.  
Hon. F. Strutt, Hon. Sec. to the Conference.

*Members of the Leicester Board of Guardians.*

Mrs Bassett.  
" Bosworth.  
Miss Coy.  
" C. Ellis.  
" Fullagar.  
Mrs Willder.  
Mr Bates.  
" Barratt.  
" Burgess.  
" Butler.  
" Carrington.  
" Green.  
" Grimes.  
" Harrison.  
" Harris.

Mr D. G. Holland.  
" A. F. Holland.  
" Islip.  
" Kemp.  
" Loseby.  
" Merrall.  
" Rooney.  
" Shaw.  
" Skillington.  
" Smith.  
" Stanion.  
" Summerfield.  
" Taylor.  
" While.  
" Yates.

Mr Jonathan North, of Leicester.  
Miss Sophia Lonsdale, Lichfield.  
Dr J. Milson Rhodes, Chorlton.  
Mr F. Lambert } Leicester.  
" W. Harrison }  
Hon. Mrs Handford.

Miss Stafford.  
" Guildford.  
" Allen.  
Mrs Holland.  
Miss Holland.

The following Unions were not represented :—

DERBYSHIRE.—Ashbourne, Glossop, Hayfield.

LEICESTERSHIRE.—Market Bosworth.

RUTLANDSHIRE.—Oakham and Uppingham.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Boston, Bourne, Caistor, Gainsborough, Glanford Brigg, Grantham, Holbeach, Horncastle, Lincoln, Louth, Sleaford, Spalding, Spilsby, Stamford.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.—Bingham, East Retford, Newark.

## SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

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3. DITTO, BY MISS SOPHIA LONSDALE, <i>Guardian of the Lichfield Union</i>	343

The MAYOR OF LEICESTER (Alderman Wakerley) said he had great pleasure in giving the members a hearty welcome to the borough on behalf of the municipality. The Poor Law was a subject which in Leicester commanded a great deal of attention, and he thought he might claim that their administration during the past half-century had been successfully carried out. Half a century ago, when Leicester had a population of 57,000, no less than 19,109 persons applied for and received relief for the half-year ending Lady-day 1848; and at the present time, notwithstanding certain causes of a temporary character, the proportion of those receiving relief to the population was only 2½ per cent., against 33.5 per cent. at the period he had referred to. He thought, in view of that diminution of pauperism, they must acknowledge that the administration of the Poor Law in Leicester had been successful. On the other hand, it might be said that the Poor Laws had been too successful, for he had noticed in the position of Master of Trinity Hospital the very large number of elderly persons who would not apply to the Poor Law authorities for relief. He trusted, however, that old-age pensions—the direction in which he believed their efforts would be directed in the future—would to a great extent remedy this difficulty. (Applause.) The Mayor, in conclusion, expressed the hope that the deliberations of the delegates would be attended with good results.

Sir WALTER FOSTER then took the chair.

The Hon. F. STRUTT, the Hon. Sec. of the Conference, stated that letters regretting absence had been sent by Mr Broadhurst, M.P., and from the four county members. Miss Mason, Senior Inspector of Boarded-out Children, wrote expressing the hope that she would in the future occasionally have the pleasure of meeting the Guardians

of the North Midland District in London. The Chairman of the Leicestershire County Council also wrote apologising for absence. He was pleased to state that twenty-three Unions had sent delegates, and that all of them had contributed towards the expenses of the Conference. (Hear, hear.)

Sir WALTER FOSTER said they had had a very kindly welcome from his Worship the Mayor, couched in appropriate and happy language, and in a spirit which would commend itself to them. They had also had a cheering word from their esteemed and invaluable Hon. Sec., showing that there was a growing interest in these Poor Law Conferences. He had great pleasure in complying with the request made to him by the Hon. Frederick Strutt to preside at that meeting, because he regarded it as a great privilege, on an occasion like that, to meet the gentlemen engaged in Poor Law administration throughout those counties. He thought the work in which they were engaged was work of the highest value to the community, and was of itself a blessed work, because after all it was the organised help given by the strong and successful in the nation to those who were weak, feeble, or failing, in the battle of life. And he knew no work which should call forth greater earnestness and devotion on the part of those engaged in it, and which should be more honoured in public esteem, than the work of Poor Law Guardians. (Applause.) In those Conferences they met for the purpose of talking over with one another their experience and their methods of administration; and he did not think anything could be more useful if done in the right spirit, and with that frankness and information which they all ought to possess. It helped them to beat out, as it were, on the anvils of each others' brains new ideas and new thoughts whereby they could go back to their work to help to remove that human misery which came before them in some of its most pathetic forms. (Applause.) Those Conferences had done good in the past; they had in many cases awakened administrators of the Poor Law to a sense of greater responsibility, and had given them new ideas in order that they might do their work more effectively, and he hoped that characteristic of these Conferences would be maintained in the future. There had been in some quarters, he thought, groundless fears as to the future of Poor Law Conferences, and those fears had arisen mainly from the fact that Parliament last session passed an Act called the Poor Law Unions Associations Expenses Act. That Act contemplated certain work over and beyond that which was being performed by Poor Law Conferences, and in the preamble of the Act—probably not in the best English—it stated that the Association of Poor Law Unions in England and Wales should be formed “for the purpose of consultation as to their common interests and the discussion of matters relating to Poor Law, and other matters relating to their duties and powers.” He hoped that Association would become an organisation of great usefulness with reference to the protection of those engaged in the Poor Law, and the general



advancement of the administration of their work. He took an interest in this Act when it passed through Committee, and he hoped it would not be allowed to become simply an Association connected with officials. There was a good deal of fear expressed when they were in Committee in the House with reference to the Act that it might become purely an organisation for promoting the interests of officials. That was a very good object in itself, but it ought not to be the sole object of an Association like that. While it did all that was right and proper in protecting the interests of any class connected with the advancement of the Poor Law, he hoped, on the other hand, it would always make its first object the improvement of Poor Law administration as far as possible consistently with the strict laws of economy, and also still more with regard to the interests of common humanity. (Applause.) He thought that as time went on changes would have to take place in Poor Law work throughout the country. He was inclined to think that local bodies would have much more to do with it, and greater freedom than they possessed at present. The traditions of 1834, excellent as they were, had, he considered, prevailed too rigidly and too long. (Hear, hear.) There had been too much unyieldingness in the central authority, and too little originality and initiative in the local bodies. (Hear, hear.) Two generations of men had now gone through the training of Poor Law administration, and out of their experience there ought to have grown a large amount of material for the improvement of Poor Law administration, and for advance on the lines of 1834. (Applause.) He hoped that the departmental fetters—or if that were too harsh a term, the departmental rules—in future would be more elastic, and that greater opportunities would be given and more direct responsibility thrown upon local bodies. The direction of future progress, as regarded Poor Law administration, was, in his opinion, in the direction of giving greater latitude and greater power to the individual boards of Guardians. While they had more power in local administration as regarded Poor Law relief, he thought, on the other hand, in regard to some of the duties connected with the public health, which now devolved upon them, in the capacity of district councils, there should be less local power and more central power. As regarded rural districts, in public health administration they wanted a common principle of action spread all over the country, and for that purpose they wanted larger central powers, and less of the inertness which now existed in too many rural districts, to the danger of the health of the whole nation. (Applause.) It would now be his duty to say a few words with reference to the statistics of pauperism in England and Wales generally, and in that particular district. He found that in the country generally they had no less than 837,000 paupers on the 1st of January 1898. Now, no less than 54,284 of these were in the North Midland District. As long as they had that enormous army of people dependent on the administration of the Unions in this country, every Guardian should feel that

there was plenty of work for him to do, plenty to think about, and plenty of cause to try and originate better methods in the work of relieving the poor when they existed in these enormous numbers. When he addressed them in 1896, the improvement in trade which we had now been enjoying for some time had not had time to make itself felt throughout the nation, but since then we had had years of great trade prosperity, great material improvement in the condition of the country from north to south and from east to west. Wages had been high, food cheap, the returns of the savings banks and friendly societies had shown habits of thrift on the part of the people, the national income and expenditure had never before reached such enormous sums, and yet at the beginning of this year the proportion of paupers was 26.9 per 1,000 of the population, a ratio higher than in 1892 and 1893, which were years of bad trade, and only one per 1,000 less than in the year 1890. The fact was, there had been no real improvement in pauperism as it existed in this country, and he thought these figures alone ought to make them feel that the condition was not satisfactory. In the whole of the country the number of paupers on the 1st of January 1898 was 836,913, of whom 231,606 were indoor, and 605,125 outdoor paupers, an increase of 239 in the total number for the year 1897. The indoor paupers had gone up by 3,641, but what was the only satisfactory feature the outdoor paupers had gone down 3,422. A further analysis showed that of the total number 90,540 were insane—an increase of 2,586; 13,563 were vagrants—an increase of 1,251; and 225,652 were children under sixteen years of age. He found also that of the 605,125 outdoor paupers, no less than 16,884 were in receipt of medical relief only. Taking these classes separately, the vagrants were an increasing number. They had gone up since 1894 from 9,480 to 13,563—an increase of nearly 50 per cent., an increase that ought to give them pause, and make them consider the best way of treating them. He believed that the direction in which they could treat vagrants most successfully would be to have in all Unions an uniform method of treatment—(hear, hear)—and when an uniform method was introduced, they should also exercise a wise discrimination, and great strictness in administration. As regarded the insane, the number had gone up from 30,000 in 1889, to treble that number in 1898. The children, on the other hand, from whom the most hopeful material for the improvement of their work was drawn, had gone down from 247,000 in 1894 to 225,500 in 1898, so that there was a diminution of 22,000 children chargeable to the Poor Law this last January as compared with 1894. Of the eleven Poor Law districts, the total pauperism had decreased in six and gone up in five, and of those five he was sorry to say that the North Midland was one. The proportion in England generally was 26.9 per 1,000 of the population. In the South-Western District it was no less than 39.5 per 1,000, whereas in the North-Western District it was only 20.44, so that they would



see there was an enormous variation between a pauperised district like the South-Western and a district like the North-Western, embracing some of the great manufacturing centres, where the pauperism was down to 20.4. In the North Midland District, where there had been an increase—not a large increase—of 310 paupers last year, the ratio of pauperism per 1,000 was 28.8 in 1896, and this year it was 28.3, so that they had gone down on the ratio percentage a half per 1,000 in the two years. The decrease in England generally had been more than four-fifths compared with half. Of the 28.3 per 1,000 in the North Midland District 4.9 were indoor paupers and 23.4 were outdoors. Taking the several counties separately, he found that Lincoln was the most pauperised, and the counties embracing the district of Derbyshire were the least pauperised. Leicester held an honourable position in the middle between the two most pauperised counties and the two least pauperised. Lincoln had a percentage of pauperism per 1,000 of 36.4; of these 4.4 were indoor paupers and 32 were outdoor paupers, so that in Lincoln they had the remarkable fact that there was the largest proportion of outdoor pauperism and the smallest proportion of indoor pauperism. In Rutland, the next county in order of demerit, the proportion of pauperism was 34½ per 1,000, of which 6.6 were indoor, and 27.9 outdoor. In Leicester the figures were 28.1 per 1,000, 5.7 indoor, and 22.4 outdoor. In Nottingham the figures were nearly 2 per cent. less than Leicester—25.3 per 1,000, with 4.9 indoor and 20.4 outdoor. Derbyshire came at the bottom of the list, and highest in the degree of merit—23.6 per 1,000, of which 4.5 were indoor and 19 outdoor. Looking at these figures, they would notice that Lincolnshire, the most agricultural county, had the smallest ratio of indoor pauperism and the largest proportion of outdoor. Figures generally do not support this view. The fears that some people expressed about 1894, when the Government was passing the Local Government Act, that there would be an enormous increase of pauperism throughout the country in consequence of the change in the constitution of Boards of Guardians, had not been realised in the North Midland District, while for the whole of England, taking the mean number of paupers on Lady-day, they found that since 1894 the ratio per 1,000 of outdoor paupers decreased from 19.6 to 19.2, while the indoor paupers, on the other hand, had gone up to 7 per 1,000 from 6.9. Although they were practically stationary as regarded outdoor pauperism, there had been in the whole country a decrease rather than an increase since the Act of 1894, and he thought they were justified in saying, if they could not say more, that the newly constituted Boards of Guardians had done their duty as well as the old. (Applause.) The most important point which they had to deal with was the question of able-bodied indoor paupers. Male able-bodied paupers of adult age were divisible into two classes—those in health and those temporarily disabled. In regard to indoor able-bodied paupers, he found these astounding



figures. In 1849 there were in the whole country 26,558 able-bodied indoor paupers, whereas this year they numbered 35,884—nearly 10,000 more than in 1849. This meant that whereas in 1849 the total number of adult indoor paupers was 1.5 per 1,000, in 1898 after practically fifty years of careful administration, they had only gone down to 1.1, a decrease out of all proportion to the amount of care and intelligence brought to bear on Poor Law administration, and which indicated something wrong somewhere. The figures relating to outdoor pauperism were much more satisfactory. In 1849 there were no less than 202,265 outdoor adult male and female paupers; in 1898 they had gone down to 64,562. So they would see there had been an enormous stride in the direction of diminishing the number of people receiving outdoor relief, while there had been no advance in the diminution of paupers receiving indoor relief. If they analysed the figures they would find that at the beginning of this year there were 9,500 able-bodied males in health in the Workhouses. For some years back the numbers had been about 9,500 to 10,000, while the number of temporarily disabled varied from 10,000 to 11,000. In the North Midland District in 1898 there were 295 able-bodied males compared with 563 temporarily disabled, in 1897 351 compared with 551, and in 1894, 343 compared with 449. Adding the numbers together, he found that there were 989 adult able-bodied paupers in the Workhouses in this district in those three years, and 1,563 who were in there through sickness. This was a point in which the North Midland District compared favourably with many other districts, for they had for every 100 male able-bodied paupers in the Workhouse for sickness, 63 who were in without sickness. This was enough to make them consider why there should be 63 in without sickness compared with 100 who had very good reason for being there. In other counties the figures were not so satisfactory. Taking some counties which were agricultural in character, they found this remarkable fact—in 1898 there were 1,819 able-bodied indoor males in health, and only 1,583 who were described as temporarily disabled, so that the able-bodied healthy inmates were in the proportion of 100 to 87 temporarily disabled. In 1894 they were as 100 to 63, and in 1893, 100 to 72. So that in these particular counties, which were chiefly agricultural, they had indoors a larger proportion of men in health than of men in sickness. He was inclined to think that this was due to the fact that the Workhouses had, very properly, been made more comfortable and pleasing than they used to be. This was a reform in the right direction—a reform which he had always advocated, and which he wished to see carried further than it had been—but carried out only in the interests of those who were thoroughly deserving, and not as an attraction to those who were not deserving. (Applause.) In some rural districts where improvements had been taking place in the Workhouses the houses of the poor had not improved to the same extent, and the consequence was that the rural labourer found the house in which he

dwelt was less adapted to his requirements, less compatible with a healthy life, and so terribly overcrowded that, in his own words, "decency was impossible, and morality a miracle." The crowded and unsanitary conditions of the houses of the working classes in some districts were a disgrace to the country, and a scandal to the times in which we lived. He was inclined to think that the bad housing in some of the rural districts was a cause of the increased able-bodied pauperism, while the improved condition of the Workhouses made them, when once experienced, difficult to leave for the hard conditions of an agricultural labourer's life, especially in the case of those prematurely broken down by hardship and unsanitary surroundings. This increase in indoor able-bodied pauperism was not due to the Act of 1894, for the special condition he had referred to was worse in 1894 and 1893 than in 1898, when agriculture had been more prosperous. That the Workhouse hospitals, he continued, must become more and more the refuge of the poor in times of sickness he readily admitted, and he was glad that Poor Law infirmaries were daily improving in efficiency, and they would, he hoped, continue to do so in every detail. They ought to be made as perfect as possible, with due regard to economy, and he was glad to hear from their able Inspector that they at Leicester were paying attention to that question, and were gradually improving the arrangements for treating the sick poor. The best economy for the State was to restore the sick man or woman to health as quickly as possible. Then again, for the worn-out veterans of labour, especially in the agricultural counties, the Workhouse was often the only refuge. No one could grudge a good shelter for such worthy objects of help, and he hoped the Poor Law administration would provide for such persons who were deserving a more home-like asylum than in the past, till a wise Government solved the pressing problem of old-age pauperism by providing old-age pensions, thereby relieving the Poor Law of a heavy charge, and giving to the deserving poor a grant which carried with it an honourable distinction instead of a traditional degradation. (Applause.) Then, again, for the insane and imbecile the Workhouses for the present must be the Asylum. In conclusion, Sir Walter said he hoped the time was not far distant when Joint-Committees of Unions in counties, and possibly for whole counties in some cases, would take into consideration questions of classification and distribution of their indoor charges. It was only by co-operation in this way that they could solve economically some of the problems of classification, and in some cases utilise existing buildings more effectively, and avoid the increasingly burdensome outlay on new buildings. It was for them to think these problems over, and when practicable, to seek to develop them, as well as the many other problems of surpassing interest and importance which fell within the boundaries of their noble work. (Cheers.)

Dr RHODES then read the following paper :—



## THE TREATMENT OF IMBECILES AND EPILEPTICS UNDER THE CARE OF THE GUARDIANS.

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*Chairman of the Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylums Committee.*

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THE fact that half the Poor Law Conferences are this year discussing the treatment of imbeciles and epileptics proves that the Guardians of England and Wales are very far from satisfied with the present state of affairs. It is anything but creditable to the authorities that although this question has attracted attention at our Conferences for a good many years, there is still a great amount of information required which only these authorities can obtain for us. It is to be hoped—I cannot say expected—that a Commission will be appointed to inquire into the distribution and treatment of lunacy in England. No doubt, taken all round, the treatment in our Lunatic Asylums is equal to that of any country in the world, but the same cannot be said of the accommodation provided for imbeciles and epileptics in many of our Workhouses. We must remember that the insane are kept in the Workhouse not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the public also, and therefore they have a right to more consideration than the ordinary pauper over whose going out we have no control. I have often asked myself, Do we Guardians truly realise what it means to live year after year inside the Workhouse imbecile wards? The monotony of the life, even as regards the diet, is no better than that of a mill horse. It consists of one unvarying round without the slightest variation. But that is only one objection. A still more serious objection is to be found in the want of classification, or, perhaps, more correctly speaking, the want of opportunities for classification. That under



our present system a proper system of classification either by character or disease is out of the question is proved beyond the question of doubt to exist in the majority of Unions by the following statistics compiled from the last published Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy for 1897.

THE TABLE SHOWS THE NUMBER OF UNIONS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTIES, AND THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF INSANE.

No. of Unions where the number of Insane does not exceed	Leicester.	Rutland.	Lincoln.	Nottingham.	Derby.	Total.
5	5	2	7	1	3	18
10	3	3	3	2	...	11
15	2	1	1	...	...	4
20	...	...	2	1	2	5
30	...	...	1	...	1	2
40	...	...	1	1	...	2
60	...	...	...	...	1	1
80	1	...	...	...	...	1
Exceeding 150	...	...	...	1	...	1
Total number of Unions,						45

It will be seen from the above table that no less than thirty-eight out of forty-five Unions have twenty or less insane inmates, and twenty-nine have less than ten in each. But the number of insane in each Union must be divided by two for the separation of the sexes. Thus in three-fourths of the Unions you find less than ten on each side of the House. Now, what does this mean? It means that the noisy and the quiet, the decent and the indecent, the clean and the unclean, are all massed together, to their common discomfort and their common injury. We have taken far more trouble over the vicious who fill our gaols than over the unfortunates who fill our insane wards. If the vicious has his welfare carefully looked after, the insane has,

in my opinion, a still better right to demand that the State shall not place him under conditions which tend to promote still further his mental degeneration.

The figures I have just quoted might lead you to think that the number of insane in Workhouses is small; the very reverse is the case. Rutland, it is true, has only eight in her Workhouses, but Leicester has 142, Derby 143, Lincoln 148, and Nottingham 245—a grand total of 686.

Surely the time has come when the *laissez faire* policy will not satisfy the people of England. We must have an exhaustive inquiry, not only into the treatment, but into the causes of lunacy, the effects of which are seen in the hundred thousand lunatics that help to fill our Workhouse and Asylum wards to-day.

It is not only England and Scotland that feel the weight of this ever-growing burden. Ireland is also suffering under it. During the last half-century the population of Ireland has enormously decreased, but the cost of maintenance of lunatics has increased six-fold. At the Health Congress at Dublin in August a gentleman stated that Ireland had not long ago almost an immunity from mental disease. The statement is not correct. During the present century Ireland has been anything but free from mental disease, though there may not have been many certified cases. The treatment of the insane in Ireland in the earlier years of the present century was simply horrible. It was stated as a matter-of-fact piece of evidence at a House of Commons inquiry in 1817, that “when a strong man or woman suffered from madness, the only way they have to manage is by making a hole in the floor of the cabin, not high enough for the person to stand up in, with a crib over it to prevent his getting up. The hole is about five feet deep, and they give the wretched being his food there, and there he generally dies.” It appears to me that the wonder would be if

he had lived. The truth is, not that there was no lunacy in Ireland, but that lunacy "was treated as a crime, and the lunatic as though he was a malefactor, not merely supposed to have committed a crime, but assumed to have been convicted of it." In 1843 the House of Lords described the lunacy legislation previous to 1843 as a distressing example of human suffering, mistaken legislation, and objectionable practice. Large numbers of the insane were, for lack of other accommodation, confined in the county jails.

The gentleman previously quoted has evidently ideas of his own on the causes of the increase in lunacy. He is reported in the *Manchester Guardian* to have said "that in the days when the Irish peasant lived on oatmeal, potatoes, flour, home-grown wheat, eggs, milk, butter, and home-grown bacon, cabbages and fowl, and when tea, foreign bread stuffs, and American bacon were not known, insanity was almost unknown in rural districts. Almost every lunatic he had was a dyspeptic, and had been an inveterate tea drinker."

It would be as correct to declare that American bacon, or Danish butter, is the cause of cancer. If the gentleman had taken the trouble to investigate the statistics of insanity in other countries, he would have found that in France, where the consumption of tea is very small, the increase in lunacy has been quite as great as in Ireland, and that in America, where they live on home-grown food, they are in no better position than is England. In fact, turn where you will, it appears that there is only too much truth in the opinion of Dr Dufour, that "civilisation, as we know, is fatal to the sanity of some, and increases the number of the insane." But still there is another aspect from which to consider this question than from that of tea and American cheese. Is it not much more probable that it is our imperfect civilisation that is at the bottom of the mischief; the combination of an unsound mind and body caused by foul environment? The greatest



increase of insanity is amongst the poor. If you want to decrease the number of the insane you must insist upon healthy dwellings for the poorest of the people; you must see that workshops are not places where men cannot live out more than half their days, and that there are more open spaces, more means of innocent healthy recreation. Depend upon it, there is a credit side to sanitation as well as a debit side. So far as regards sanitary improvements it will be found in the long run that there is actually a profit side, and that just as sanitary improvements have diminished the physical death-rate, so in the future better moral and physical surroundings will diminish that mental death-rate which we know as insanity.

We, unfortunately, have no Aladdin's lamp wherewith to transform the horrible old slums into healthy dwellings, but we can do something by the combination of Unions to provide better accommodation and treatment for the mentally diseased. If you were to adopt the system that has been adopted by the Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylum Committee and also by the Edinburgh authorities to provide Cottage Homes for the harmless cases, the cottages holding from forty to sixty, you would have a much better chance of proper classification; for you must remember that in Homes where you have sixty lunatics, the houses have each three day-rooms, by means of which the patients can and do classify themselves according to character. Another very important point about these Cottage Homes is their sleeping accommodation. No dormitory has more than ten beds in it; by this subdivision, the patients are saved from the almost nightly disturbance caused by some noisy case—and noise is always more or less associated with the large Work-house dormitory. Another point, and a very important point, is the necessity for providing more ground for occupation and recreation than we do at present. London and Edinburgh, Manchester and Chorlton

are each providing a large amount of ground for their patients, and I am quite sure, from what I have seen, that far more ground ought to be provided for them. We more and more recognise the fact that in very many cases the best treatment for those who suffer from mental disease is work on the land, and the consequence is that the authorities are buying larger areas for Asylums. The following figures are interesting as showing the rapid increase in the amount of land considered requisite :—

Asylum.	Year Erected.	Acres.	Patients.
Derby, - - -	- 1851	79	360
Barony, Glasgow,	- 1875	167	500
Gartlock, do.	- 1896	344	524
Edinburgh, - -	- Plans passed.	700	about 1000

This employment of patients on the land is not a matter of theory. On the Continent you see it carried out in all the best Asylums, with the result that the patients are less noisy and not so troublesome as in the prison-like Asylums you find in some of the backward countries on the Continent of Europe, where the high-walled court and mechanical restraint of a very severe kind are by no means unknown, reminding one of the bad old times when madness was treated as a crime.

I have spoken very briefly on the treatment of imbecile paupers, because I dealt at considerable length with the question at the North-Western and North Wales Poor Law Conferences last month. To-day I wish to speak more particularly of the necessity that exists for a great modification in regard to the treatment of sane epileptics. I doubt if many people, even in the profession, understand how enormous is the number of persons who suffer from epilepsy, and how small a percentage is really cured. The following are the percentages of cures, as given in the returns of the best Epileptic Asylums :—

Asylum.				Percentage Cured.
Uchtsprunge, Germany,	-	-	-	11
Bielefeld, do.	-	-	-	8
Aulequaille, France,	-	-	-	6
Zurich, Switzerland,	-	-	-	8
Ohio, America,	-	-	-	16

At the present time we have in Lancashire Work-houses over 600 sane epileptics. That number implies about 5,000 for all England. Of course this is only a small quota of the real total. In France, where the Commission on the Insane and Epileptic took a great amount of trouble over the statistics, it was found that there were about 30,000 epileptics, but even these figures have been proved to be far too low. Of this total Dr Lunier estimated that about a third would be much better in proper institutions, not only in the interests of themselves but also of the State.

No doubt a very large number of epileptics are at certain times not responsible for their actions, and a careful inquiry by experts would, I believe, disclose the painful fact that some of the cases in our prisons should be in epileptic colonies. Dr Bruce Thompson, of Perth Prison, states that while among the general population the proportion of epileptics is 1 per 1,000 of population, it is 1 per 100 of convicted criminals. As the proportion of epileptics in Scotland and in Ireland is much less than in England, we must have a very considerable number of epileptics in English prisons. It appears to me a very debatable question how far you are justified in providing special accommodation for the criminal lunatic, who often becomes a lunatic through drink, while you leave the epileptic to take his chance in gaol, where the surroundings will certainly tend to that mental degeneration to which all epileptics are only too prone. There is no doubt a very close relationship between epilepsy and crime, and I am afraid so long as we continue to leave undone those things we ought to have done, so long will our prisons be occupied to a considerable extent by epileptics, and no wonder



need be expressed with regard to the condition of the epileptic to-day. As a great Frenchman has said, from their very childhood "misery is their heritage." No school will take them on account of the fits, which frighten other children; as they grow up they find all occupations closed against them, females cannot find employment as domestic servants, for as cooks they are liable to fall into the fire, as nurses to let the children fall, as waitresses to let the dishes fall, as shop-girls they are refused employment because the attacks alarm customers, and even laundry-work is closed against them for fear of their falling face downward into the tubs. The consequence is that a considerable number, driven to despair by their terrible affliction, take to the streets and probably end by having to seek admission to our maternity wards, so adding to the already mighty army of the unfit.

It is high time the State began to realise that it is the duty of the State to do no less for the epileptic than it has done for the insane, and to carry out that duty, it will be necessary to establish special Asylums. In bygone days, England used to lead the world in improving the administration of the law dealing with the dependent classes. Unfortunately for the present—let us hope it is only for the present—we have ceased to occupy that position. Poor Law "made in Germany" is, as regards epileptics, better than our own; and the States of New York and Ohio have both State Institutions for the treatment of sane epileptics superior to anything we have in England. It was only in 1894 that the State of New York resolved to establish, in Livingstone County, a colony for epileptics, to be known as the Craig Colony. In September 1897, they had their buildings so far completed that 214 cases were in residence, and before the end of this year they will have accommodation for between three and four hundred. Even then there will be, according to the report, about 800 epileptics in

Alms-houses, Hospitals, and Asylums who should be transferred to a colony, where, instead of being a perpetual and unhappy burden to the taxpayer, they can not only earn a large proportion of the cost of their maintenance, but enjoy that particular care, education, and treatment which their distressing condition requires.

The authorities state in their last Report that, having a larger number of cases and a longer experience, "they are able to reiterate even more emphatically the statements made as to the humanity, utility, and economy of the colony scheme of caring for one of the most miserable classes of the State's dependents."

The good results of such treatment are in nearly every case noteworthy, and in many cases remarkable. The changes observed include improvement in general physical health, gain in weight, development of character and capacity, and restoration of cheerfulness, happiness, and ambition. Most of the patients have presented a marked reduction in the frequency of their epileptic attacks, and some have had few or none at all. Much of the general betterment of their condition is ascribed to healthful out-of-door occupation. This healthy out-door occupation is of benefit not only to the patients but also to the ratepayers, for from the financial report of the institution it appears that the colony was able to produce 50 per cent. of the cost of its maintenance during the first year and 56 per cent. during the second year. To show such a result as this, it will be of course absolutely necessary to purchase plenty of land. The Edinburgh people were so impressed with the advantages associated with the large area of land provided at the Continental Asylums that they have purchased no less than 700 acres.

Craig Colony is not the only one that appears to be a success. The people of Ohio are evidently satisfied with the results they have obtained, especially as regards the gratifying improvement in the disposition

and temper of the inmates, and no doubt the patients of the poorer class have a better chance in a first-class institution than at home, because they receive that care and treatment which are not secured elsewhere, while many very poor people are relieved of the burdens and heavy responsibility associated with the care of dependent and helpless and often dangerous relations.

Now, whatever means are used for this purpose, they cannot be properly employed without the free expenditure of money. The primary requirement in forming any institution of this class is that there shall be no stinting of means. If such an institution cannot be carried on to fulfil all its purposes, it had better not be undertaken at all. No half-way measures should be attempted; they are liable to be worse than useless, as being not only ineffective but obstructive to true progress.

For that, if no other reason, we must do one of two things, either ask the County Council to do what has been proposed, or combine and do it for ourselves. I think the latter course is, at any rate in the case of large Unions, the best; and even in the case of small Unions, why should we not combine, as District Councils have done in many places, to provide accommodation for infectious diseases? I know it may be said that I am recommending a course that will take patients a long way from their friends. I am afraid that is not of much consequence, so far as the friends are concerned, because from inquiries I have made at one of our largest Asylums, where the patients are almost all from within a radius of a dozen miles of the institution, it was found that in the vast majority of instances the patients were rarely visited after the first six months. As I said before, the system I advocate is one under which would be provided plenty of land on which to build Homes which would each provide for from forty to sixty patients, with a much greater amount of liberty than at present in Workhouse surroundings. If I were



the only advocate of the colony system, I should have considerable hesitation in recommending it, but when you find that out of nineteen Asylums that were asked the question, Are you in favour of the colony plan for epileptics? eighteen answered Yes, and one "Not so far," I think we are justified in coming to the conclusion that there is good ground for the opinion that the colony system is the best that has been devised so far for the treatment of the harmless insane and epileptic. Before many months are over I hope we shall have a more complete report than any we have yet had. The Lancashire Asylums Board, being of opinion that if you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself, have appointed a Committee to inquire into the treatment of imbecile and epileptics at home and abroad. To expect that you can ever make institutions of this kind self-supporting is, in my opinion, absurd; but there is no doubt that the Craig Colony authorities have proved that epileptics can be usefully employed to the benefit of all concerned.

I advocate better provision for the epileptic and harmless imbecile, not only for their own good, but for the benefit of the nation at large. So long as we neglect to do our duty, and continue to class with the vicious and drunken the unfortunate epileptic under the common term pauper, so long, I am afraid, will the multiplication of the unfit continue, as our Workhouse wards and Asylums too surely prove.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Rev. Canon DENTON (Ashby-de-la-Zouch) said he must first take the opportunity of thanking Sir Walter Foster for his valuable help in Parliament on behalf of the Poor Law Unions Association. They had in the very able paper of his friend Dr Milson Rhodes an illustration of the good work which the Conferences were doing. It was a paper in itself most valuable, and yet only one of a series, for during the past month Dr Rhodes had read papers before two other Conferences. As one of the Committee of the Central Conference, he could only urge members to purchase the official Report of the Proceedings, published by Messrs P. S. King & Son, West-

minster, and thus secure the series of papers and the valuable report of discussions on the great variety of subjects which were of importance to them as Poor Law workers. He also trusted that in future the papers would be inserted in the official Report in the order in which they were read before the Conference. After the last Conference in Lincoln the papers were not printed in the order in which they were read, and therefore it appeared from his (Canon Denton's) remarks that he was in agreement with a paper from which he emphatically dissented. And now as to this paper, he thought that all who were engaged in Poor Law administration must agree as to the necessity for the establishment of institutions for the feeble-minded and epileptic, and very great use would be made of them in the various districts. Their hearts went out to all kinds of suffering and distress, and the case of families having imbecile or epileptic members was particularly hard; but these would be much better in institutions, and many, not paupers, who were maintained at home, were more or less a danger to the community. If they had more institutions of the kind suggested by Dr Rhodes such cases would be gradually brought into them. He would advise Guardians to read Miss Tuckwell's book on this class of Poor Law institutions in the Metropolis. He bore testimony to the wonderful devotion of mothers and sisters to their imbecile and epileptic relatives; but if such patients could be treated in proper institutions, it would be a very great benefit to the patient and to the community at large. (Hear, hear.)

The HON. SECRETARY said that though he was not a Guardian he was a member of the Asylum Committee of a neighbouring County Council. He would like to ask Dr Rhodes whether he regarded available statistics as to idiots and epileptics as reliable. He learned that there were a large number of cases kept at home by the better class of people, and he thought it would be a good thing alike for the sufferers and for the general public if institutions could be opened that would be available for such paying patients. They would be astonished to find the great numbers of well-to-do people who would avail themselves of such institutions, and who would be able and willing to provide for the maintenance of their unfortunate children. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HOLLAND (Leicester) said he wished to thank Dr Rhodes not only for his paper, but for the great assistance he had been to the Leicester Board of Guardians. (Cheers.) They had consulted him on several occasions, and he had received them with the greatest kindness, and given the fullest possible information on all points connected with their scheme. They were in Leicester about to enter upon, indeed they had received the sanction of the Local Government Board to the purchase of some sixty acres of land, and they were now proceeding to get a loan for the erection of buildings and other purposes, and would doubtless before long be in a position to deal with the matter in that borough. The Leicester Guardians were



rather priding themselves on this, that although they had had advice from Dr Rhodes, they were in some respects in advance of the Chorlton Board. How they would get on later he could not say, but he fervently hoped that they would be able to count upon Dr Rhodes's invaluable assistance in the future. (Cheers.) They were making a small beginning, and would not erect expensive buildings until they had tested the system. It was one of the most grievous sights to see the poor imbeciles and epileptics sitting morning, noon, and night, without any interest in life, and without that care and attention which should be bestowed upon them. That helplessness did not attach so much to the females as to the males, for the former were very often usefully employed. The males had nothing to do, and so they passed their days. Then again, however careful a Board might be about their afflicted patients, the surroundings were gloomy and dull. The Leicester Guardians were happy to think that the new scheme would give greater freedom, not only in walking about the grounds, but in finding employment for the patients. Some time ago a circular was sent out by the Leicester Guardians asking various Boards what assistance they would be likely to afford in the way of sending patients to the special institution. The response was very satisfactory, but, as he had said, the Leicester Board had determined to begin in a small way. Classification by Unions was an excellent plan, but for the large centres like Birmingham and Leicester he thought that separate institutions must be provided. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. W. H. H. FAIRCLOUGH (Burton-on-Trent) said he was very glad that the subject had been brought before them, and hoped that it would not end with talking. He proposed a resolution before the Burton Board, and invited them to approach the County Councils of Staffordshire and Derbyshire with a view to getting them to put their powers in operation, and establish schools for weak-minded children. He happened to be invalided in a certain town in Derbyshire, and to see the local paper containing a report of the Guardians' discussion in that town of his proposal, and their answer was, we have only one child who would be eligible, and that is not worth the expense. Every little child ought to be looked after and cared for. The Workhouse was not the best place for a weak-minded child. (Hear, hear.) The feeble-minded required special training, as at Starcross, but it was very expensive to send children there. One of the boys from Burton was sent there, and was now earning his own living, although if he had not had the advantage of the Starcross treatment, he would probably by now have been in a lunatic asylum. He advocated the establishment of a school at a point convenient for two or three counties, and he hoped that Guardians would support their good friend Mr Barber in his efforts in the matter. His own (Burton) Union could not do as Leicester had done, because it was not large enough to support a separate institution. They were very much obliged to the Leicester and Birmingham Boards for the response made to an inquiry as to whether they would admit children



from the Burton Union. He hoped that the Conference would not end in mere talk, but that they would do something for their little feeble-minded folk.

Hon. F. STRUTT said the question had been before the Derby County Council, but not with very encouraging results.

Rev. C. E. DANBY (Market Harborough) thought that they all entirely agreed with Dr Rhodes in his paper. They had all felt the difficulties of the subject. The treatment of the children was a distinct problem from that of the adults. The question in the paper was the treatment of the feeble-minded and epileptic in the Workhouses—a very difficult one for small Workhouses, where there were only one or two cases, yet quite enough to upset the whole of the rest of the House. There seemed to be only two or three ways out of the difficulty for such Unions—to get the imbecile certified for the lunatic asylum, to combine with other Unions similarly situated, or to avail themselves of institutions that might be provided by large towns like Leicester; and the last seemed to him to be the most promising course for the small Unions.

Miss ELLIS (Leicester) wished to add her sincere thanks to Dr Rhodes for the kind help he had given the Leicester Board. (Hear, hear.) With reference to what Mr Holland said about the monotony of life in the Workhouse, she was glad to say that through the kindness of a colleague (Miss Fullagar) a vigorous branch of the Brabazon work had been started in the Leicester Union, with noticeable results in the improvement of the temper of the patients. She had great sympathy with a class who were not paupers, and yet could not afford to pay to send their imbecile relatives to special institutions, and thanked Canon Denton for what he had said on this particular.

Mr DEXTER (Belper) expressed the opinion that the maintenance of the feeble-minded should be a national rather than a local matter, and that it should be entirely dissociated from Poor Law administration. With regard to epileptics, the greater part of their time they were rational and lucid, and their time should be properly utilised—on the land, for instance—with benefit to themselves and to the community in the shape of a reduction of the cost of maintenance. In view of the growing burden of the rates, it was important to keep down the expenses as much as possible. Every new departure necessitated a lot of officials, and an estimated expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000 often ran into twice that figure.

The PRESIDENT invited Mr Stevens to speak.

Mr STEVENS (Local Government Board Inspector) said that anything he had to say would be less with the idea of giving information than as a student of the question the same as themselves. The subject had been very ably and lucidly placed before them by Dr Rhodes, and it was perfectly clear that some different mode of treatment was required in the small rural Workhouses, which were comparatively powerless by themselves to deal with the difficulty. Combination amongst Boards might be useful. Some of these afflicted

persons were very useful characters in the Workhouse, yet it was very undesirable, both for them and other inmates, that they should be warded together night and day. It appeared to him to be a matter for consideration whether at some of the Workhouses additional buildings could not be erected at the expense of combined Unions for the treatment of harmless imbeciles and epileptics instead of going to the enormous expense of multiplying separate institutions throughout the country. The epileptics who were in the Workhouses through no fault of their own were in a very sad condition indeed, and he had had lately under his notice a serious accident that resulted from keeping an epileptic patient in an ordinary ward—a young man fell forward in a fit, and broke his nose, and sustained other injuries. It must be borne in mind that epileptics often had long intervals of sanity, and he did not know what course should be adopted with regard to them. He would be very sorry to see them relegated to institutions where all their association would be of the insane. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that the consideration with the question by the Conference would lead to the advantage of the classes concerned, and that the epileptics, if they were to be removed to separate institutions, would be placed among sane people. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. E. H. MULLINS (Mansfield) said that nine months he acted as chaplain of a large South London Workhouse, where he was responsible for the spiritual supervision of 1,200 people. He devoted special attention to the imbeciles, and was successful in interesting them by means of a kind of penny-reading entertainment. He would suggest that some of the capable and kind-hearted young men and women in the large towns should have the permission of the Guardians to visit the Workhouses, and give this class of entertainment. The feeble-minded required manual instruction.

Mr ANDREW (Chairman of the Leicester Guardians) said the Leicester Board had taken up the question of the Conference in an enthusiastic spirit, and he was very glad to see that the Conference was such a success in point of the numbers attending it. (Hear, hear.) The subject under discussion was one of great importance, and the Leicester Board had been very successful in its dealings with the Local Government Board about it. It so often happened that after voluminous correspondence, and several inquiries as to some new scheme, the Local Government Board discovered that in consequence of an Act of Charles I., or William IV., or somebody else, nothing could be done. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) So far as the Leicester Board had proceeded in the matter, they were immensely indebted to Dr Rhodes. The report of the visit to the Continental institutions by Dr Rhodes and his friend Mr M'Dougall was the acknowledged text-book on the subject. The Leicester Board bought sixty or seventy acres of land near the town for the nominal sum of £7,000. They had perhaps 80 or 90 people of their own, and they expected to deal with about 30 more from various Unions in the county. For those 120 people they proposed to build from four to half a dozen



pavilions, which they thought would be enough for the purpose. He believed they would not only be able to make the lives of these unfortunate people happier in every way, but that they would also be able to get back part of the money laid out upon the institution. (Cheers.)

Rev. E. BUSH (Hinckley) said it was a great advantage to have an expert like Dr Rhodes give them his views on the question. There were many weak-minded persons in the villages, and it made one's heart bleed to see the monotony of the feeble-minded in the Workhouses. The Leicester Board were doing all in their power to solve the problem. (Hear, hear.)

Dr RHODES said they wanted more institutions for the feeble-minded, especially the girls. He hoped that in the next Census steps would be taken to ascertain the number of epileptics. Every feeble-minded child required some one to stay at home with it, and for that reason, if for no other, something ought to be done for them. The Leicester Guardians seemed rather pleased at having outrun the Chorlton Board, but it was through no fault of his Board that the delay had taken place in providing the buildings. The Local Government Board had held another inquiry only the previous day, and he believed that their Inspectors were that very day viewing the site. The Chorlton Board had combined with Manchester not only in this matter but also in regard to tramps by the erection of a test-house. The previous evening a meeting was held in Manchester, at which a Northern Association for the Care of the Feeble-minded was formed in that city. As an illustration of the good done by these institutions, he might mention that Sir John Hibbert told him that at the Royal Albert Institution a letter was recently received from a General in Egypt, to know whether a certain soldier who had distinguished himself in the Soudan had ever been an inmate of that institution, and it was found that he had. Combination between Boards would be most beneficial, and these Conferences were helping Guardians to know one another better. (Cheers.)

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The delegates were entertained at lunch by the chairman and members of the Leicester Board, at the Liberal Club. At the conclusion of the repast, Mr Andrew, who presided, proposed the health of Sir Walter Foster, M.P., of whose services to the country he spoke in eulogistic terms. Sir Walter replied, and proposed the health of the Chairman and Members of the Leicester Board, acknowledging the great hospitality which had been shown to the delegates on their visit to Leicester. Mr Loseby, Chairman of the House Committee, responded.

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On the resumption of business,

DELEGATES to the CENTRAL CONFERENCE were chosen, viz.:—

Rev. Canon Denton (Ashby-de-la-Zouch);

Mr R. G. Hanson (Chairman, Basford Union); and

Mr A. Andrew (Chairman, Leicester Union).



The CONFERENCE COMMITTEE were also elected :—  
Mr O. B. Stanion (Leicester);  
Mr Slack (Bakewell); and  
Mr Alderman Barber (Burton-on-Trent).

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The Hon. F. STRUTT (Hon. Sec.) stated that Mr Chance (Hon. Sec., Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences) had written expressing regret at his inability to attend the Conference, and suggesting that perhaps a two-days' Conference could be arranged in future.

This suggestion was left to the Committee for consideration.  
Mr NORTH then read the following paper :—

## THE BOARDING-OUT SYSTEM.

By J. NORTH, Esq.,  
*Guardian of the Leicester Union.*

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THERE can be no subject of greater importance or of deeper interest to Poor Law Guardians than the one which is suggested by the title of this paper.

All profess to be in sympathy with the deserving necessitous poor, and further, are ready at all times to acknowledge the claims of such to the kindly consideration and help of those whose official position would be without value apart from a full discharge of these obligations, but as all are fully aware there is another class whose poverty is of a *distinct type*, and such as they are willing to bear with cheerfulness, being a heritage transmitted to them by their predecessor, and which will, as an evidence of their respect and appreciation, be kept inviolate, to be passed on at the proper time to the faithful custody of those who shall come after them.

This leads us to the ever-recurring problem still waiting a solution. How can this disease of hereditary pauperism, this incubus which is a menace to society, be eradicated? Obviously, like all other diseases, the best time to apply the remedy is during

the earlier stages of its development, or, as in this case, with the children. Further than this it must be pointed out that the children who come under the care of the Poor Law, in addition to their inherited taint of pauperism, are more likely, in view of their parentage, to be predisposed to other moral defects than children in the ordinary walks of life, so that it becomes of paramount importance that they should be placed under the best possible influences, and further than that under conditions calculated to foster in childhood, and develop in after-life, to the fullest extent possible *the true spirit of manly independence*.

The title of this paper suggests what many who from long experience and special opportunities of forming sound judgment claim to be the best system for dealing with the children of the State, viz., boarding out; and here we make bold to affirm that *as a system* no other can compare with it. To deny this proposition is to deny the *natural* order of things—to say that family life and the influences peculiar to family life are all of no value. We are aware that it would be unfair to claim for all the children placed under the boarding-out orders all the advantages appertaining to the well-regulated family, just as it would be unfair and misleading to take a family presided over by wise, discreet, and capable parents and to say that it was typical of family life in England, and further it would be equally wide of the mark if you were to select the most conscientious and large-hearted foster-parent you have in your institution and to say it was a specimen of foster-parents in the main. What we need to do is to take a broad and comprehensive view of the question, and endeavour to ascertain whether in practice it is capable of securing a measure of success somewhat in proportion to what it offers theoretically. Boarding-out, like other systems, is not free from drawbacks and difficulties. It cannot be successfully worked in a slipshod manner—the

precautionary measures framed for guidance must be duly observed, otherwise the good results which should follow will be lost. Miss Mason, the Local Government Board Inspectress, has wisely put it, "That notwithstanding it is the best of all systems, it may become in the absence of proper care the very worst."

Boarding out of pauper children is not by any means a new system, dating back as it does, by order of the Central Authority, some thirty years ; but it has been of recent date (comparatively) put on a broader basis. Enlarged powers have been given to Guardians, and rules and regulations for its proper management have been drafted.

Referring more in detail to the Orders issued, the one in 1870 by the Poor Law Board permitted Guardians to board out orphan or deserted children within the limits of the Union to which they belonged, but no power was given them to board out beyond those limits. The result of this restriction was that Guardians of large Urban Unions experienced a difficulty in finding a sufficient number of suitable homes ; but these Orders were revised in 1889, and powers granted to board out beyond the Union, under a Voluntary Committee of ladies and gentlemen whose duty it should be to find suitable homes in agricultural districts, the Guardians to pay a fixed weekly sum for the children's maintenance, and also to defray the cost of clothing, medical attendance, &c., but in all other respects the Boarding-Out Committee to be held responsible for the care and welfare of the children. Further, the rules which must be observed under this Order are very complete and thorough, and are such as will, if properly carried out, reduce the risks to a minimum. It can therefore be readily understood that such a well-defined scheme is a totally different thing to that which obtained under the old *régime*, when children were placed out indiscriminately, in many cases with those who were themselves in receipt of out-relief, and such as were in



many other ways unfit to have the care of children. There can therefore be no wonder at those who have a knowledge of these days, and who have a remembrance of the evils produced by such a lax method, manifesting a strong prejudice against any system which appears in any way to resemble it.

We now proceed to urge reasons why we consider boarding-out superior to any other system, and also to give evidence of its practical working in support of the same.

In the first place, it restores the child to family life, which is an institution of God ; and thus giving it an opportunity of establishing bonds of union and affection which may prove of inestimable value in after-life. Then the experience gained in the real everyday home life must be very helpful in bringing out the character of the child, enabling it, though unconsciously, to develop self-dependence and resourcefulness. It has an opportunity of observing the need there is for economy, the efforts necessary, as we say, to make both ends meet, the little struggles in order to attain some desired end. All these exercises must serve as a useful education fitting it for future years. How different to all this is life in an institution, where the child grows up accustomed to see the necessities provided without any effort on its own part, or apparently on the part of others. The larder replenished with food from the store with the regularity of the clock. The clothing handed out at fixed periods according to the regulations.

It must also be a distinct advantage that the children are allowed to mix with others at the ordinary public school, subjected to the same discipline, and participating generally in the advantages afforded, which must be, on the whole, in advance of what can be provided by any separate Union. We are aware that some see in this liberty a distinct drawback,

because they say it subjects the children to temptation from which they are screened in a separate institution; it is quite true that children so guarded have fewer opportunities of forming undesirable acquaintances, but it must be remembered that with *these* the time comes when they must enter upon life in earnest, and the question is whether they are as well prepared for this complete change, being unused to the world, unused to undertake the least responsibility, and finding that the support hitherto given, suddenly withdrawn—whether this is not likely to prove more than their inexperience can grapple with, and so render them more liable to conform to the worst influences which surround them.

Another of the advantages of boarding-out is its depauperising effect over and above all other systems. Do all you may—clothe them as dissimilar as is possible—divide them in separate cottages under distinct foster-parents, if they are a community of *themselves*, meeting in one school, mixing in one common playground, associating as a body at the same religious services—they are Poor Law children and nothing more. Then, in after-life, the cottages which have done so well for them in childhood are no longer accessible, and if they must need find a refuge during temporary stress, it is the Workhouse, with a renewal of the instincts of former days. All this we believe may be obviated if during their earlier years they find their place amongst others in the ordinary walks of life. The object to be borne in mind by Guardians is to bring about a distinct and complete separation with all that pertains to the spirit of pauperism. This leads us to suggest the undesirability of the “Relieving Officer” coming in touch with those cases. At the same time we are strongly in favour of the Guardians (as the direct representatives of the ratepayers) taking the responsibility, and exercising a judicious oversight, as far as possible. Having said

this, we see no objection to enlisting (even in case of within Union boarding-out) the help and co-operation of an outside Committee composed of suitable persons interested in the welfare of children. The visitation needs to be carried out with tact and judgment, not in a fussy nor officious manner, but rather in a way which will prove helpful and encouraging to the worthy foster-mother, at the same time making it plain to the doubtful ones that a watchful interest is taken on behalf of the children entrusted to their care.

The question of cost is a matter which we cannot afford altogether to ignore. We find, then, that boarding-out is cheaper and more economical than other systems in force. We would not, however, urge its adoption on this score alone, believing that the real interest of the ratepayer will be found in providing those children with an education which will help them to become self-supporting. At the same time we believe that boarding-out, if properly and carefully administered, will secure this desirable end, so that, if in addition to this, there can be saved the expenditure of large sums of money in the erection of big establishments, which are expensive in their maintenance, and liable to become an unnecessary burden on the rates should the number of children decrease, a double purpose will be gained. Then the adaptability of the system to the varying numbers to be dealt with is worthy of notice. With an institution the chief items of expense are always the same, whereas in boarding-out each case is dealt with separately, so that whenever a child ceases to be chargeable the full cost is at once saved. We do not think it necessary to enter at any length into details of the comparative cost of the various systems. We may, however, for the purpose of emphasis, quote from a table supplied in the Report of the Committee appointed by the Local Government Board to inquire into the existing systems for the maintenance and education of children. We there find the average cost



per child in the several districts and separate schools of the Metropolis is as follows :—

Average cost per child for maintenance	-	-£10	13	8
„ „ „ for salaries and maintenance of officers	-	-	8	9 5
„ „ for furniture, repairs and other expenses	-	-	5	0 0
„ „ per child for loans, repayments and interest	-	-	5	2 5
TOTAL		-	-£29	5 6

It will be seen that the actual maintenance of the children is not half the total cost.

By the side of this the cost of each child boarded out is given, calculated upon the allowances usually made by Board of Guardians, and is as follows :—

Maintenance at 4s. per week	-	-£10	8	0 per annum
Clothing at 10s. per quarter	-	-	2	0 0 „
Medical attendance at 2s. 6d. per quarter	-	-	0	10 0 „
Schoolmasters' report at 1d. per week	-	-	0	4 4 „
Incidental expenses at 1d. per week	-	-	0	4 4 „
TOTAL		-	-£13	6 8 „

The Committee add this significant note: “From this statement of cost it is clear that in urging an extension of the boarding-out system and the utilising of certified homes, we are recommending the adoption of methods which will result in a substantial gain to the ratepayers; and if, as we anticipate, there should be a corresponding advantage to the children themselves, the saving of expenditure will be a double gain.”

It can with reason be urged that boarding-out may be proved, *theoretically*, to be an excellent system without assuring its success in practice; so that we propose now to advance evidence of its practicability, and to show that it has been tried for a number of years with the best possible results. In Scotland the system has been widely practised and carefully administered for upwards of forty years, and has on

the testimony of one of the Scotch Inspectors “stood the test and strain of all that could come against it, and that each succeeding year only affords proof of the beneficence of the scheme as regards the children, and of its value to society in washing out pauperism and raising in its stead useful men and women to the community. It has long since ceased to be an experiment, it is one of the best and most useful parts of our Poor Law administration.” The same authority states: “We have hardly ever known such a thing as a boarded-out child returning to pauperism except under such physical circumstances as are common to all classes of humanity.” Another Inspector of a large city parish states, “that all children under thirteen years of age are boarded out with remarkable success, at fourteen years of age they find employment as readily as do others, and in after-life succeed as well as other people.” He sums up by saying that “the results in general are highly satisfactory, and fully justify a continuance of boarding-out for all orphan and deserted children.” One other reference only to Scotland. Another Inspector says: “We board out all orphan and deserted children. The latter we prefer to send to the country out of the way of relatives, who are often worthless characters. The orphans are placed out successfully in the city, and it is rare that any one of the children, after ceasing to be chargeable, ever again become paupers.” The total results in Scotland, as far as detailed information could be obtained, deal with some 10,000 children, on which a return has been made, with the highly satisfactory result that  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. only turned out failures.

Opponents of boarding-out are compelled to admit the success of the system in Scotland, but state that the circumstances and habits of the industrial classes are better and more favourable than those which obtain amongst the same class in other parts of the kingdom; but there is surely no force in this contention in view

of the fact that the success is equally pronounced when tried elsewhere. In Ireland the system is also extensively practised. The returns of the Irish Local Government Board state that in 1890 there were 2,623 children boarded out by the Guardians of 107 Unions; it is affirmed that the tendency of boarding-out here as elsewhere is to diminish the number of children thrown on the rates. It was the experience of one Union as soon as the system was commenced, and the children were sent to a distant place, that no less than forty were claimed by their parents and other relations in one week.

Coming nearer home we find that the Leeds Union have nearly twenty years' experience of boarding-out, and quote from a printed report of 1887, "The Committee in issuing its present report does so with unabated confidence, not only in the principle of the boarding-out system, but in its practical working as shown by the result of eight years' experience." The report goes on to say that a more intimate knowledge is gained of the circumstances of each case than can possibly be known of children in the mass in the Workhouse or Poor Law School, . . . and that it is owing to the great care with which the members of the Committee (assisted by their zealous and intelligent officer) guard the welfare, both moral and physical, of the children placed out in foster homes, that their beneficial work has been carried out for so long with so little friction, with almost a total absence of mishaps, and with so much advantage in every sense of the word, both to the children and the ratepayers. The Committee experience no difficulty in finding amongst the respectable working class suitable homes for the children, and further, they have reason to be generally well satisfied with the treatment they receive, and also of their good training. No difficulty is experienced in finding situations for the children, either boys or girls, when they have attained working age; in many cases



when the Guardians cease to pay the fees, then their foster-parents find situations for them as though they were their own children, they then become absorbed in the general working-class population, and the Guardians have no further trouble with them. It will be seen that this report is not of recent date, although it is the last they have printed, but we have a letter from the respected Clerk of the Board, stating that the experience to date is equally satisfactory, and justifies the same unqualified confidence in the system.

It is worthy of note that boarding-out is superseding all other systems in the Australian Colonies.

In Victoria most of the large institutions have been closed, and boarding-out has become almost the only system. In South Australia the Secretary of the State Children's Department states that "the result of boarding-out has convinced every one interested in the matter that it is the very best plan of dealing with children committed to the care of the State, and that the introduction of the system has resulted in a saving to the colony since its adoption of £40,000. In New South Wales the State Children's Relief Department has withdrawn all children from institutions and boarded them out, leaving only one or two large schools which are practically reformatories. The President of the department considers that the system is a saving of at least 25 per cent. to the country, apart from other advantages."

There would be no difficulty in extending considerably this part of our inquiry, but sufficient has been advanced to make it plain that the boarding-out is not by any means a new or untried system. The only wonder is, that in view of such clear and conclusive evidence in its favour so few English Unions have adopted it. Doubtless prejudice plays an important part, to some it savours too much of "out-relief," and that to such is like the proverbial red rag to the bull, but whether the contention that out-relief produces

that which it seeks to remedy is proven or not, one thing is clear, viz., that all experience goes to show that where boarding-out has been given a fair trial, the results are uniformly *remedial*.

This paper would not be complete without further reference to the Report of the Poor Law Schools Committee which was submitted to the House of Commons so recently as 1896. The scope of the inquiry was a wide one, embracing every system in practice for dealing with the children of the State. Exhaustive evidence was given by experts bearing upon each, and we find that beneficial results of even feeble-minded children are said to attend boarding-out. Reading from the report, Miss Jane Walker, M.D., who inspects the children, numbering upwards of 1,500, which are boarded out by Dr Barnardo, says that "weak-minded children do extremely well boarded out, the absolutely idiotic are far happier boarded out than in the institution. We had to send one such child back to his foster mother because he was so unhappy when taken away." . . . "We had to return one child, the mother fretted so." This testimony is valuable as showing the possibility of finding foster-mothers capable of treating even the most unattractive children with kindness, to say nothing of affection. The Committee say : "We are satisfied that, as a general rule, the children are treated by their foster-parents with a kindness which often develops into affection. It is even asserted by some witnesses that there is a tendency on the part of foster-parents to be less strict and more indulgent with the boarded-out children than with their own."

Dr Barnardo, who has had a large and varied experience in the management of destitute children, gave evidence before the Committee. He said that he had first the barrack institution and then the village home, but had since adopted boarding-out as superior to either of them, and would not create another large institution in any circumstances, and that although he

has had many opportunities for adding to his institutions, he has declined to do so because boarding-out is so much better.

We may also refer to the evidence given by another witness, merely as confirmation of the contention made in the earlier part of this paper, that boarding-out has a tendency to reduce pauperism, and the following remarks of the Committee: "A further advantage to the ratepayers is the prospective decrease of pauperism, because the children become absorbed in the general population, and further, the parents are deterred from deserting their children when they know that they will be boarded out." The witness stated: "That in the St Pancras Union the Guardians advertise the names of children whom they propose to board out, and that the numbers are always reduced. The children are claimed by relations, who say, 'We do not mind how long you keep them in the school, but we will not let them be boarded out. We will rather keep them ourselves.'"

We now pass on to refer to one or two objections which are urged against boarding-out, such objections being very amply and reasonably met by various witnesses who appeared before the Committee. It has been said, and rightly too, that children, and especially the boys, brought up in an institution receive technical training which enables them when they leave to get their own living, but if boarded out they are deprived of this advantage; it may, however, be said that this deprivation is only one which has to be suffered by most other children, but Dr Barnardo has adopted a plan which has proved successful in meeting the difficulty, and which is explained as follows:—"After the children have passed the school age, and before they are placed out in service or other employment, they are taken through a course of technical training, the boys receiving instruction in various trades, and the girls in needle-work and laundry work." The Committee also add the useful suggestion, "That



when more children are boarded out and school accommodation has thus been set free, it would no doubt be found feasible to convert one of the existing institutions into a special training school for boarded-out children."

Another objection which is urged with some amount of force is the *motive* which prompts the foster-parents in undertaking the responsibility and care of the children. The Committee say, "There is a very general, and not unreasonable fear amongst those who are unacquainted with boarding-out, lest foster-parents may wish to receive the children merely for the sake of making a profit by them, and that any wholesale adoption of the system would degenerate into what is known as 'baby farming ;'" and they further remark, "The evidence which we have received upon this question is, however, completely reassuring." Miss Mason says, "That in the first instance the children are undoubtedly taken for a profit, but that in many instances the foster-parents become so attached to the children that they would ultimately keep them without payment rather than part with them." The following remark, regarding the amount paid to the foster-parents for the maintenance of the children, is pertinent, and has our full acquiescence :—"The payment made for the boarding-out children doubtless ministers to the comfort of the foster-parents by increasing their income. They have no extra rent to pay, no extra firing, and the food provided for the child may possibly, and probably does, suffice for the foster-parents as well. Nor is it unreasonable that the foster-parent should derive some small advantage from taking the children, for the trouble and anxiety involved in the education of a child is worthy of some remuneration, and contrasting the sum spent upon the salaries and maintenance of the officers and servants who are employed to look after the children in large institutions, it would not be unreasonable to pay the foster-

parents when one child only is received a slightly higher sum in order to leave a small margin of profit."

"The maximum sum of 4s. per week as now allowed might, in our opinion, be increased in special cases, such as growing lads or delicate children requiring extra care and attention."

And now we would like to be permitted to state one or two matters which are important, and which must be observed in the application of this system, in order to its success. A Government Inspector of Workhouse Establishments of wide experience has said, "That boarding-out can only succeed upon three conditions, viz.:—Good selection of homes, liberal payment to foster-parents, and efficient supervision."

The selection of homes is the first and most important duty. We do not mean by this altogether the size of the house, or the value of the furniture, but rather the general character of the people, and their suitability and fitness to discharge so important a duty. This involves a most careful investigation as to their past history and present reputation. Sentiment must play no part in this business, it must not be a question of trying to do some would-be foster-parent a good turn by supplementing their income, not even under the plea that such an arrangement would be the means of keeping the people themselves off the rates, but it must ever be borne in mind that boarding-out exists for the benefit of the children, and not for that of the foster-parents.

Then a constant, judicious visitation cannot be too strongly impressed, as well as the co-operation and help of the Board School teachers, who are in a most favourable position to judge of the treatment the children receive from their foster-parents, and also as to their well-being generally.

And now, with a view of keeping this paper within the reasonable limits allowed for its reading, we propose to make only one other reference, and that for

the purpose of comparing boarding-out with the only other systems of which it can be said they offer to any degree the same advantages, viz., "The Cottage Homes," and what is known as the Sheffield "Scattered Home System." Of the former we have some knowledge, and wish to be distinctly understood as having no wish to disparage in any way the good work done under this system; we would rather desire to bear personal testimony to the unstinted, self-denying services of many who have given long years of their valuable lives for the purpose of helping and advancing the interests of the poor unfortunate children who have been deprived of parental protection. "The Scattered Home System" is said to have fully met the expectations of its promoters—and although it is not what is understood as boarding-out, yet it is more nearly like it than any other system—notwithstanding we are compelled to say that our investigations only confirm our previous convictions that boarding-out is the best system for dealing with orphan and distressed children, and we conclude by a citation of the concluding remarks of the Local Government Board Committee in their investigation of the "Cottage Home" system: "We have so far considered all that can be said in favour of this method of pauper education, and it now remains for us to review the disadvantages of the system. At its best, even when administered by an efficient board of management, and a superintendent in every way devoted to his work, it is but a *palliative*, not a *cure*, for the evils which are shown to be inseparable from great institutions. It is not, and cannot be the realisation of the home system."

Miss SOPHIA LONSDALE then read the following paper:—



ASSUMING THAT BOARDING-OUT IS  
DESIRABLE, WHICH IS THE PRE-  
FERABLE MODE, WITHIN UNIONS  
OR WITHOUT UNIONS?

BY MISS SOPHIA LONSDALE,

*Guardian of the Lichfield Union.*

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IT is rather a narrow view of the boarding-out system which I have been asked to present to you, and before entering on my subject I wish to guard myself to some extent against misconception. I fully grant that boarding-out is an excellent system, but at the same time I wish to make it perfectly clear that I mean the system properly carried out and safeguarded in every possible way. No fair-minded person can read the annual reports of the Senior Inspector for boarding-out without being convinced that the system is encompassed with difficulties and dangers, and that it takes a particularly sharp and experienced person to make a thoroughly efficient visitor of boarded-out children. I have been a visitor for eight or nine years, and I am quite sure I am not nearly sharp enough yet.

Now there are, as every Guardian here knows, no less than three methods of boarding out our pauper children. They are—

1. Boarding out by the Guardians within the limits of the Union without the help of a Committee.
2. Boarding out within the limits of the Union with the help of a Committee.
3. Boarding out without the limits of the Union through the medium of a Committee.

I propose to set before you as briefly as I can the advantages and disadvantages of each plan, to weigh them against one another, and then to sum up as impartially as I can in favour of one of the three. I hope that this method of dealing with the subject may

provoke discussion, for I suppose that is really the chief use of the papers read at these Conferences.

1. *Boarding out within the limits of the Union without the aid of a Boarding-out Committee.* The advantages claimed for this form of boarding-out are, I believe, two :—

(a.) That it is cheap. (b.) That the Guardians keep the immediate control and supervision of the children in their own hands.

(a.) The “cheap” argument is a fallacious old friend with whom we are all familiar, but in this case the fallacy is, I think, more transparent than usual. We know the argument well in the case of ordinary outdoor relief, and it is remarkable, and to quote the words of a well-known Poor Law authority, “discreditable to the intelligence of the English people,” that it has survived so long. The Association for the Promotion of Boarding-Out declares boarding-out under these conditions to be “a bad form of outdoor relief.” To that dictum, with which I cordially agree, I would venture to add that it is, I believe, a particularly extravagant form.

A Guardian of a large Union in the Midlands told me a short time ago that children were constantly brought before her Board by relations (an uncle or aunt, or an elder married brother or sister) who told the Guardians that they would undertake the care of the children if a weekly allowance of 2s. or 2s. 6d. per child were made. Now of course this is in fact nothing else than ordinary outdoor relief, but as it is illegal to grant outdoor relief to children except through their mothers, the process is dignified by the name of boarding-out, the Guardians have to conform to certain provisions of the Boarding-out within Unions Order, and, I am sorry to say, it is recognised as boarding-out by the Local Government Board. My friend told me that her Board considered it a cheap plan, but added in the same breath that they boarded

out a large number of children in this way. I did not ask her whether this might not to some extent account for the very large outdoor relief bill which I know is presented each half-year to the long-suffering rate-payers of that Union. Nor did I suggest to her what, however, I will venture to suggest to you, that a considerable proportion of those children would most probably have been cared for by the relations without any payment at all, if they had not been tempted by the Guardians' 2s. 6d. a week dangling before their eyes, which they knew well enough could be had for the asking.

(*b.*) The second point claimed in favour of the plan is, that the Guardians do not hand over their powers to another body.

I am inclined to think that this, too, is an imaginary advantage, at any rate so far as the welfare of the children is concerned.

The Relieving Officer is, it is true, bound to visit children boarded out in this way, and to fill up a report form which is duly presented to the Guardians. This he does once a quarter, no doubt in the course of his ordinary rounds. The Relieving Officer is, generally speaking, an overworked individual who has already far more to do than he can attend to properly. Is he, do you think, the ideal person to visit children, especially little girls? Does he, do you suppose, examine the clothing of the children—look at their boots, for instance, to see whether they are large enough? Does he observe whether there are bruises or scars? Does he examine them as to cleanliness? Does he take care to go at unexpected hours, and occasionally at meal-times, and see what sort of food the boarded-out child is having, and whether it is being fed as well as the other children in the house? Does he ever go upstairs into the bedroom and look at the bed in which the child is supposed to sleep? Does he detect overcrowding? All of us here to-day have



taken for granted that boarding-out is an excellent system. I ask this Conference, as practical men and women, whether they think it is likely or even possible that a Relieving Officer can do the hundred and one things which are absolutely necessary if our ideal is to be made into a reality.

In what, then, does the control of the Guardians consist? To what does it amount? In some cases, no doubt, Guardians regularly visit the children themselves, but too often there is reason to believe this most important duty is left entirely to the Medical and Relieving Officers.

It has been remarked that we can find in the pages of "Oliver Twist" an exact description of what this child-farming under the auspices of parochial officials may become. The Guardians of Oliver Twist's Union certainly achieved cheapness, and their control through the majestic medium of Mr Bumble was absolutely complete. May we not fear that in some of the 176 Unions where this plan prevails, the child thus brought up may in reality become, in the words of that immortal official, "a naughty orphan what nobody can't love."

I cannot help thinking that the advantages of this method are really illusory, although I do not think we can flatter ourselves that the disadvantages of it are equally imaginary.

From what I have said I hope you may see that the special disadvantages of it are :—

(a.) Extravagance.

(b.) Immorality and desertion are encouraged, if not rewarded.

(c.) The supervision of the children is neither suitable nor sufficient.

(a.) I have already hinted that I believe this plan leads to children being thrown on the rates and becoming paupers who would otherwise be kept by their relations.

(*b.*) Let us take the case of a girl who has had an illegitimate child. She deserts the child, with or without the collusion of her family, leaving it on their hands. They come to the Guardians and say, "If you will give us 2s. or 2s. 6d. a week for this child—in other words, board it out with us—we will keep it, otherwise you must take it into the Workhouse." If the Guardians comply, are they not relieving the mother of the consequences of her misconduct?

(*c.*) I have, I think, already dealt with this point sufficiently.

Other drawbacks there are, but as these are common to all forms of boarding-out, I will not touch upon them now. I will only say that in this method of boarding out within the Union without the help of a Committee, the safeguards are far fewer and the risks tenfold greater than in either of the other two methods we have now to consider.

2. The second method is: *Boarding out within the limits of the Union with the help of a Committee.* This is, I think, for many reasons, much to be preferred to the first method, provided, of course, that you have an active, devoted Secretary, and a discreet, painstaking Committee.

The advantages claimed for this form of boarding-out are:—

(*a.*) That the homes are carefully chosen.

(*b.*) That the supervision is good.

(*c.*) That the Relieving Officer's visits can be dispensed with.

(*d.*) That the children are seldom, if ever, boarded out with relations.

(*a.*) I think there can be no doubt that a Committee whose sole business it is to look after these children is more likely to be careful in the selection of homes than Boards of Guardians. I do not wish to be misunderstood, and in saying this I do not mean

that Guardians have not the will to be careful, but they have so many duties which they cannot delegate to other bodies that they really are unable to devote the necessary time and attention to matters of detail. I refer more especially to Guardians of rural Unions who are many of them District Councillors as well as Guardians. It is absolutely necessary (if, that is, we want to realise our ideal of what boarding-out ought to be) that each circumstance of the family in which it is proposed to board out a child should be carefully weighed; the peculiarities and disposition of the child should be considered, and the round peg fitted into the round hole.

(*b.*) The visits of practical women, who in some cases have children of their own, who are very often the wives, daughters, or sisters of Guardians, must, one would think, be of more use than the hurried inspection of an overworked official. Then, too, it is, I believe, the practice of most Committees for the different members to visit the various homes from time to time, so that although, as a rule, the same visitor goes to the same home, she is liable at any time to have her views of it corrected by another person, and the Secretary visits all the homes at intervals. We must remember, too, that the fact of there being a Committee need not prevent the Guardians from visiting the children at any time, either themselves, or through their Relieving Officer, if they desire to do so, although one of the advantages of this plan is—

(*c.*) That the visits of the Relieving Officer can be dispensed with, and the children can thus, to a certain extent at any rate, be dissociated from the Poor Law and from the Workhouse from which they have been taken. Not that I believe in that piece of chimerical cant, the “Workhouse taint.” Ladies and gentlemen, there is no such thing. I know the “pauper taint” well enough which helps to fill our Workhouses, but it is



acquired outside the Workhouse, not within it. I have seen plenty of children brought up in a Workhouse who had nothing of the pauper about them. I have known men and women in the Workhouse who had none of the pauper spirit. I have known children brought up outside the Workhouse on outdoor relief who were paupers from their cradles ; whose one idea through life, in all its crises, great or small, has been to fly to the Relieving Officer. I have known men and women in every rank of life who were strongly imbued with the pauper taint, who all their lives have got others to fulfil their duties for them. I have heard the words "pauper" and "pauperism" objected to. I object to the facts as strongly as any one here, but I confess I fail to see that anything is gained by declining to call things by their right names.

(*d.*) Boarding-out Committees contract with the Guardians to board out a child for a certain fixed sum ; there is therefore no temptation to them to get it "done cheap." Committees are strongly recommended by the Local Government Board to avoid boarding out with relations, and it is therefore seldom, if ever, done.

The consequence is, that relations who wish to do so, keep the children, but not at the ratepayers' expense, and the result in our Union has been a decrease in the number of orphan children thrown upon the parish. In fact, our excellent Secretary is complaining that her occupation is fast leaving her, although almost every child that can legally be boarded out is referred to the Committee as soon as possible.

The disadvantages of this plan are :—

(*a.*) That the children are not effectually separated from undesirable relations.

(*b.*) That, like the first plan, it puts a premium on desertion.

(*a.*) I think there can be no doubt about this. Of course Guardians do frequently adopt children under

the Act of 1889, the boys up to the age of sixteen, and the girls up to eighteen, and thus legally the relations have no power to interfere with them until after those ages. But practically it is an exceedingly difficult thing for foster-parents to keep the children entirely separated from their belongings, and I suspect that in many cases they do not even attempt to do so.

(b.) This disadvantage has been stated and denied over and over again, and there is no time now to go deeply into the question. Those who wish to know all that can be said on the subject cannot do better than refer to Mr Chance's admirable book called "Children under the Poor Law," where in chapter eight they will find all the arguments on either side clearly stated.

I must confess I think there is a good deal in the objection. Not that I believe for one moment that any amount of temptation could induce a good father or mother to desert their children; but I think this boarding out within the Union under a Committee is attractive to a large class of people who are neither very good nor very bad. To them, the four shillings a week, besides the extra allowance for clothing, spent upon the children while they are young and useless, may well be a temptation, coupled with the knowledge that when they are old enough to be useful, the parent may reappear and claim the child and its earnings. Is not this a dangerous object-lesson?

3. *Boarding out without the limits of the Union through the medium of a Committee.*

The advantages claimed for this plan are:—

(a.) That the children and foster-parents are under the inspection of the Local Government Board, and the Committees are under the supervision of its Inspector.

(b.) That the children are entirely removed from their undesirable belongings.

(c.) That desertion is discouraged.

(a.) This is, I think, a most important point, and I should like to say something about it. Children boarded out within the Union, whether by the Guardians direct, or through a Committee, are not under the inspection of the Local Government Board. It has been suggested that Inspectors should be appointed for this purpose. An objection has, however, been raised, and there is of course a great deal to be said for it; that it is undesirable further to stamp boarding out within the Union with official approval. Unfortunately the Local Government Board halts between two opinions, and permits boarding out within the Union without proper safeguards. Surely it should do one thing or the other. Either it should forbid boarding out within the Union altogether, or if this is impossible, it should inspect.

Is inspection necessary? Most emphatically "Yes." Miss Mason, the Senior Inspector of boarding-out, in her evidence before the House of Lords Committee on the Infant Life Protection Bill, stated that she found it necessary to order the removal of a boarded-out child on an average about once a fortnight, on account of some shortcoming in the home. Now this is surely a very serious statement, and shows how indispensable outside inspection really is; yet at the present time thousands of children are boarded out, not only under no Government inspection, but, as I have attempted to show, without any proper supervision at all.

There are several advantages connected with Government inspection. One is, that really shocking cases of neglect and cruelty have been brought to light which had entirely escaped the observation of either Guardians or Committees. Another is, that the Inspector has educated Committees in their duties by hints and advice, and has been able to make them thoroughly efficient. A third is that, if a Committee is found to be inefficient, and after due warning will



neither alter its ways nor submit to authority, the Local Government Board withdraws its license.

I know that many people interested in boarding-out object to inspection ; they say that it destroys the confidence which Committees, foster-parents, and children should have in one another. I am bound to say that I do not think this need be so, nor is it, I believe, found to be the case where Committees and foster-parents are doing their duty. The foster-parents are told when they first take the children that the homes will be inspected by the Inspector of the Local Government Board, and undertake the charge on that condition ; I therefore fail to see where the hardship lies. Even if there were hardship (which, however, I do not admit), I should prefer this (and so, I think, would every Guardian here) to running the risk of cruelty, neglect, and even worse. If you really want to see what has actually happened to boarded-out children, read pages 199 and 200 of Mr Chance's book, to which I have already referred, and I think you will be convinced that inspection is absolutely necessary.

(*b.*) The removal of children from undesirable belongings is a very great advantage. I suppose there is nothing more disheartening to Guardians who are really interested in their work than to see worthless relations swoop down upon the child who has been carefully trained in good habits, and carry it off to a bad home or vicious surroundings. Now, boarding out without the Union puts an end to this kind of thing ; the Guardians alone know where the children are, and although they can lay their hand upon them at any moment, the relations cannot.

(*c.*) Miss Lidgett, a Guardian of St Pancras Union, in her evidence before the Metropolitan Poor Law Schools Committee, was very positive on this point, and said, that although relations did not object to the children being sent to schools, they did object very strongly to their being boarded out at a distance.

The Guardians of a large Metropolitan Union, who board out most successfully all their children who can be legally dealt with in this way, are of opinion that the number of deserted children left on their hands is smaller than it used to be. I should, however, like to say that the remarkable success which these Guardians have had is entirely due to the excessive care with which they work the system.

It is hardly necessary to point out that advantages (*b*) and (*c*) will only be secured by Guardians who board out their children with Committees at a considerable distance from the Union. I have heard of Guardians who board out in neighbouring Unions, and in such cases the relations, no doubt, have access to the children. Boarding out under such circumstances has, one would think, most of the disadvantages of boarding out within the Union.

The disadvantages, so far as I am able to judge, of this form of boarding out are:—

(*a.*) That the children are not under the immediate control of the Guardians.

(*b.*) That the importation of large numbers of children into country villages is undesirable.

(*a.*) I think I have already met this objection under another heading. But I should like to add that if Guardians decide to deal with their children by boarding them out, they should, I think, prefer the plan which is best for the children's interests, and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe boarding out without the Union to be by far the best of the three plans. I should hesitate to express this opinion so strongly if I did not know that it is held by all the best authorities on the subject.

(*b.*) The importation of large numbers of children is a hardship to country villages, especially in the case of boys, nor are the boarded-out children always absorbed into the general population. Good situations for boys in a country neighbourhood are not plentiful,

and it seems unfair that the few there are should be filled by interlopers to the exclusion of local talent. Guardians can, however, ascertain whether or no the Committee they propose to employ are careful not to overstock their villages; but it is only fair to say that Miss Mason, who has, of course, the best possible opportunities for judging, is of opinion that it is increasingly difficult to find good homes. Guardians who board out boys must, I think, be prepared to send them, when they leave school, to a training ship or some other institution, or else to go on paying for them, till they are sixteen or seventeen years of age. Personally I am not in favour of boarding out boys, unless under exceptional circumstances. I believe it to be far better for them to be sent to a good school where they will be taught a trade, and will be enabled to earn their living when they leave it.

I know very well that this is by no means an exhaustive treatise on a most important matter, and I hope the many gaps I have left may be filled up in the discussion which will follow the reading of this paper.

I have purposely refrained from entering on the general question of boarding-out, because I felt that the Conference Committee for excellent reasons had narrowed the subject to its present form. Boarding-out is attracting a great deal of attention just now, and I do not wish to say anything that can possibly be construed into depreciation of the system itself. But I feel bound to say this. There is, I think, a serious danger attaching to any system which has become the hobby of the hour; and the danger is, we are apt to imagine that salvation from responsibility and from the necessity of doing our best and taking pains about details is to be found in a system. It is the administration of a system which is the important thing, and I believe a bad system well administered to be far preferable to the best system badly administered. I believe, and in this faith I am confirmed by the opinion



of experts, that the boarding-out system requires more care and constant supervision than any other if grave abuses are to be avoided.

We cannot all have "the infinite capacity for taking pains" which amounts to genius, but unless we are prepared to take all the pains we can, or to enlist workers who will take trouble on our behalf, we had far better select some other way of dealing with our children than boarding them out. No system will work itself, but there is just now a tendency to exalt boarding-out (in any form, with or without safeguards) as if it were a panacea, a specific for all child pauperism. This thoughtless, foolish, wholesale advocacy is really the chief enemy of the system, and threatens its very existence. It tends to discredit it in the eyes of unprejudiced persons, and unless it be checked, can only end in disaster. If, however, we use this system in a reasonable way, with reasonable precautions, and with reasonable expectations as to what it is likely to effect, it will, there can be little doubt, prove to be one of the best ways, side by side with others, for dealing successfully with our Poor Law children.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Mr W. SMITH (Nottingham) said in listening to the two papers he had been impressed with the emphasis laid upon the necessity of the boarding-out system being worked with very great care and almost superhuman vigilance, and he doubted, except in the case of particular Unions where there might be one or two persons having plenty of leisure and a great deal of acuteness, whether boarding-out would be very successful. He thought the better system was to keep the children in the Workhouse—(laughter)—where they would come under the immediate notice of the Guardians. From a financial point of view, and especially in respect to giving boys trades, he also thought the Workhouse system was preferable, for they ought not to forget that, whatever their feelings might be to do the best they could for the children under their charge, outside the Workhouse there were many poor people, under no obligation to the Guardians or Union, whose own children had to go out into the world as labourers because their parents were too poor to give them a trade or better calling. In the interests of these poor people, they ought to consider

the matter from an economical point of view, and if they did that he was not so sure that they would be justified in adopting the system of boarding out.

Mr J. C. WRIGHT (Grimsby) said he had been a member of a Boarding-out Committee for many years, and he desired to express his approval of the system. In his own Union they had had ample proof of its advantages. He was afraid that the cost of the Scattered Home system would prevent its general adoption, and therefore they were limited to keeping the children in the Workhouse or boarding out. But it was essential that the Boarding-out Committee should be composed of intelligent, fearless, and sympathetic persons. In Grimsby there was no difficulty to find good homes for the children. Visitors to boarded-out children must not only see the house where the children dwelt, but also see and interview the children. He would like to see the boarding-out principle extended, so that every child who came under the care of the Guardians could be dealt with in that way. (Cheers.)

Mr STANION (Leicester) said that having been brought up in the Crossley Orphanage, Halifax, he was an out-and-out advocate of the institution system of bringing up children. They thereby learned habits of regularity, and were under the personal supervision of the authorities, which they could not be if they were quartered out with labouring people. It was impossible to find a sufficient number of desirable persons as custodians of boarded-out children.

Rev. Mr FAIRCLOUGH (Burton-on-Trent) said no system should be condemned because of a few failures at the outset. In Burton they had boarded out since 1891 about eighty children, and the percentage of failures had been about 5 per cent., much lower than among ordinary families, in fact. He could not quite understand from the paper whether Miss Lonsdale was in favour of boarding out or not. He was a strong advocate for boarding out a distance from the Union to which a child belonged, and, if necessary, the withholding of information as to the child's whereabouts from undesirable relatives. (Hear, hear.) They needed a good committee and a good lady secretary to make the system successful. In his Union they had an exhaustive series of questions which had to be answered in the periodical reports upon the boarded-out children's condition, and if the answers were not all entirely satisfactory the child was removed to a new home. (Hear, hear.) In some cases a real and lasting affection had sprung up between the children and the foster-parents. Institutions did not fit the children for the kind of life which they would in the majority of cases afterwards lead. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. Canon DENTON (Ashby-de-la-Zouch) said he regretted that his friend Mr Chance was absent that afternoon. He would recommend the Guardians to read Mr Chance's admirable book on "Children under the Poor Law." He (Canon Denton) was now in favour of boarding out; home life was the highest type of social life, and it assuredly was most desirable that the children under



their care as Guardians should if possible know something of home life. (Cheers.)

Mr DEXTER (Belper) said he concurred with Mr North's views as stated in the paper; but he could not gather how Miss Lonsdale's opinions stood at the end of her remarks. He emphatically dissented from the view that an institution was a good thing in which to bring up children. (Cheers.)

Mr THOMPSON (Burton-on-Trent) said he introduced boarding-out at Burton-on-Trent as the result of one of these Poor Law Conferences. (Enthusiastic cheers.) The children themselves knew it was derogatory to be in a Workhouse, and he gave an interesting illustration of the joy with which a party of children hailed their departure to be boarded-out. "Hoorah! hoorah!" they shouted, "we're not Workhouse lads any longer." (Loud applause.)

Replying on the discussion,

Mr NORTH briefly recapitulated the principal points in his paper, and said that when children were boarded out they were much better fitted for the battle of life than if they were reared in the clockwork routine of an institution. (Cheers.)

The PRESIDENT proposed the re-election as Hon. Secretary of the Hon. F. Strutt. There could not be a better one. (Cheers.)

Rev. Canon DENTON seconded, saying he would rejoice if their good friend Mr Strutt would consent to be regarded as the Permanent Secretary of the Conference. (Cheers.)

Mr DEXTER supported the proposition, which was carried with acclamation.

Hon. F. STRUTT thanked the members of the Conference, and expressed his readiness to serve for another year.

Mr S. SHAW (Leicester) moved a vote of thanks to Sir Walter Foster, M.P., for presiding.

Mr ANDREW (Leicester) seconded the proposition, which was enthusiastically agreed to.

Sir WALTER FOSTER, M.P., said it had been a great pleasure to preside once again, and he believed that such Conferences must tend to the benefit of the poor, and therefore of the nation generally.

Rev. Canon DENTON proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman and members of the Leicester Board of Guardians.

Mr THOMPSON (Burton-on-Trent) seconded, saying that if the members would visit the town during his term of office as Mayor he would give them a hearty welcome. (Cheers.)

Hon. F. STRUTT proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Mansfield (Clerk of the Leicester Board).

Dr RHODES seconded.

Mr MANSFIELD, who was warmly greeted on rising, briefly thanked the members.

The proceedings terminated.





## Yorkshire District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE YORKSHIRE DISTRICT POOR  
LAW CONFERENCE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAM-  
BER OF THE TOWN HALL, WAKEFIELD, ON  
FRIDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER 1898.

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*President*—Mr A. W. STANFIELD, Ex-Mayor of  
Wakefield.

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference :—

### BARNSELEY—

Saxton, Rev. E. Johnston.  
Akeroyd, E.  
Crawshaw, S. J. (Master).

### BEVERLEY—

Turner, Tom.  
Stephenson, Miss K.  
Hobson, C. W. (Clerk).

### BRADFORD—

Guy, T. A. (Chairman).  
Cockroft, Richard (Vice-Chairman).  
Asman, Destin W.  
Patchett, J.  
Jefferson, W. A.  
Milligan, T. W. B.  
Armitage, Thos.  
Crowther, Geo. M. (Assistant Clerk).

### BRIDLINGTON—

Medforth, R.  
Sutcliffe, Margaretta P.  
Greame, Colonel G. Lloyd.  
Simpson, John B.  
Gray, C. (Clerk).

### DEWSBURY—

Rearden, Wm.  
Appleyard, C. H.  
Goodall, William.  
Pickersgill, Chas. P. (Assistant Clerk).

### DRIFFIELD—

Staveley, H. H.  
Speak, Thos. D. T.

### GUISBOROUGH—

Milligan, James.  
Bradley, W. (Assistant Clerk).

### HALIFAX—

Turner, H. J. (Chairman).  
Tillotson, J. W. (Vice-Chairman).  
Longbotham, Arthur T. (Clerk).  
Wilkie, Miss C. B. S. (Lady Supt.).  
Strange, Ernest A. (Assistant Clerk).  
Kippax, Smith (Master).

### HEMSWORTH—

Rhodes, George.  
Simpson, J. B.  
Scholefield, J. (Clerk).

## HOLBECK—

Whitaker, Joseph (Chairman).  
Booth, James.  
Woodhead, L.  
Moore, J. B. (Clerk).

## HUDDERSFIELD—

Fitton, C. (Chairman).  
Whitwam, E. (Vice-Chairman).  
Siddon, Miss Emily F.  
Crowther, John.  
Cocking, Mrs.  
Beaumont, John.  
Pyrah, Mrs.  
Bentley, G.  
Kendall, Edward.  
Oldham, G. W.  
Sykes, A.  
Sugden, W.  
Walker, T.  
Rigby, E. A. (Clerk).

## HULL INCORPORATION—

Feldman, F. (Governor).  
Farrell, J. (Deputy-Governor).  
Lawton, A.  
Sharp, E. T.  
Atkinson, Peter.  
Winter, R. H. (Clerk).

## HUNSLET—

Robb, J.  
Woodcock, Mary E.  
Dickenson, Eliza A.  
Siddon, John.  
Butterick, J.  
Mee, F. W. (Clerk).

## KEIGHLEY—

Clapham, W.  
Clough, T.  
Pickard, R.  
Hopkinson, M.  
Spencer, G. E. (Clerk).

## KNARESBOROUGH—

Pickard, Mrs.  
Woolam, Miss.  
Gill, W. Hare.  
Musgrove, Mr.  
Smith, J. (Clerk).

## LEEDS—

Baines, Miss Margarete.  
James, Harold B.  
Ford, J. H. (Clerk).

## MIDDLESBOROUGH—

Munro, Miss.  
Hanks, James.  
Curson, R.  
Walker, H. V. (Assistant Clerk).

## NORTH BIERLEY—

Roberts, Uriah S.  
Harper, Wm.  
Haigh, Amos.

## PENISTONE—

Hinchliffe, T. A.  
Goddard, J. H.  
Laycock, James.  
Swift, R. M.

## PONTEFRAC—

M'Gowan, W.  
Thornton, Wm.

## SCULCOATES—

Galloway, R. A. (Chairman).  
Fisher, J. H.

## SEDBERGH—

Pickering, Robt.  
Taylor, C. E.  
Inman, Richard.

## SHEFFIELD—

Chappell, Mrs.  
Smith, Wells.  
Roper, Mr.  
Booker, A. E. (Clerk).

## SKIPTON—

Fletcher, A.

## TADCASTER—

Rhodes, J. C.  
Myers, T.

## WAKEFIELD—

Beaumont, E.  
Moorhouse, W. (Acting Chairman).  
Spurr, E.  
Balmforth, D.  
Maddison, T. R.  
Shaw, W.  
Rhodes, C.  
Thornton, H. P.  
Dixon, Mrs M.  
Kaye, J. E.  
Swaine, A.



WAKEFIELD—*continued.*

Thornton, Helen.  
Sykes, L. A.  
Muirhead, James.  
Leak, John.  
Kendall, Wm.  
Thorp, J.  
Sherwood, B.

WAKEFIELD—*continued.*

Beaumont, H. (Clerk).  
Carver, A. W. (Assistant Clerk).

YORK—

Wragge, R. H. Vernon (Chairman).  
Falconer, P.  
Snaith, T.

VISITORS.

Lord Bishop of Wakefield.  
G. H. Roberts, Esq., Mayor of Wakefield.  
Alderman W. H. Milnes.

Lady Catherine Milnes-Gaskell.  
Miss A. Wilkie.  
A. R. Blackburn, J.P.

The following Unions were not represented :—Aysgarth, Bedale, Bramley, Doncaster, Easingwold, Ecclesall Bierlow, Goole, Great Ouseburn, Helmsley, Howden, Kirby Moorside, Leyburn, Malton, Northallerton, Pateley Bridge, Patrington, Pickering, Pocklington, Reeth, Richmond, Ripon, Rotherham, Saddleworth, Scarborough, Selby, Settle, Skirlaugh, Stokesley, Thirsk, Thorne, Todmorden, Wetherby, Wharfedale, Whitby, Wortley.

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FRIDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER.

Mr ARTHUR T. LONGBOTHAM (Hon. Sec.) read an apology from Lord Milton, M.P., in which he expressed regret that it was, unfortunately, impossible for him to accept their invitation to attend the Conference.

The MAYOR, at the outset of the proceedings, gave the members of the Conference a cordial welcome to Wakefield.

The PRESIDENT opened the proceedings by a few preliminary words of welcome. He then said—I should like to draw your attention to the fact that some time ago Mr Chamberlain made the remarkable statement that one person in three at the age of sixty-five in this country was a pauper. This almost incredible assertion appears at the first aspect to show that the Poor Law administration is a failure, and that our boasted nineteenth-century civilisation fails in one of the essentials of good government, “The greatest happiness of the greatest number.” This result

would be apparently better secured if the masses of our countrymen took up their abode in the sunny islands of the Pacific Ocean. This lamentable condition of the poor of England evidently calls for some remedy. The common tramp is no doubt a great factor in bringing about this deplorable state of affairs. He is so well known that he needs no description. If we class him with the residuum as described by John Bright, or if we say he is amongst the dregs of the working classes, it would be a wrong definition. He is a class by himself: dirty, spiritless, and rapacious: a nuisance wherever he goes, and no use either to the country or to himself. Like some of his betters, "He toils not, neither does he spin." It is the problem of every Board of Guardians in England how to treat him. The present method of dealing with him is to make relief as unpleasant as possible in order to deter him from applying for it. We can only describe this treatment as the method of despair.

It is a curious fact that the tramp has been a troublesome fellow from time immemorial. An Act passed in 1388 prohibited tramps from wandering about the country and begging alms, and enacted that "sturdy vagabonds and valiant rogues" were to be punished:—

First offence by a whipping.

Second offence by the loss of their ears.

Third offence by hanging.

This and other subsequent Acts on similar lines, however, put no stop to vagrancy.

The great Poor Law Act of Elizabeth's reign, which has been attributed to Sir Francis Bacon, was then passed, and if we had left it alone, in all probability there would now be but little pauperism. It enacted that "vagrancy was a curse to the country, and must be got rid of at any cost."

From this time constant efforts have been made to "put down tramping," but with little success; and in the present day swarms of tramps roam through the country and make the casual wards their hotels. Nor can we be surprised at this, for the present system allows a tramp to drag about a woman (very often not his wife), and two or three miserable children with him, on a perpetual walking tour, at the public expense. His children often grow up without education or training of any kind. They mix with the most depraved characters, and glory in imitating them; and when they grow up they become confirmed tramps, and swell the ranks of the great army of vagrants that goes upon the road.

Mr Fowle, a writer on the Poor Law, speaking of this time, says: "All the injury inflicted upon the labouring classes in the times of the Tudors was but as dust in the balance compared with what they suffered from the benevolent measures of some of the best men who have ever ruled England. The poor might well say, 'We can deal with our enemies, only save us from our friends.'"

In addition, a special danger to the public exists by allowing

tramps to wander about the country in the filthy condition they often are. Well-authenticated cases of cholera, smallpox, and other diseases having been disseminated by them, are recorded.

The history of the Poor Law (though we are not fond of learning from history, and that perhaps is one reason why history so often repeats itself) shows that a "hard" administration of the Poor Law is really the best for the general welfare of the masses; and if made universal, combined with uniformity of treatment, would soon diminish vagrancy. The celebrated Workhouse Test Act almost eradicated pauperism.

While on the other hand the Poor Laws of George III. were too lenient. They were passed with the most humane intentions, but their results were extremely disastrous. Therefore in dealing with tramps we must harden our hearts. They laugh at those who treat them compassionately. In proof of this, where they are well treated the largest number is to be found. And an example of the success of "hard" administration is the remarkable decrease in vagrancy that has followed upon the adoption of the plan of two nights' detention and forced labour in certain Unions. This "hard" administration must be made universal, otherwise the stream of tramps is only diverted to neighbouring Unions where the administration is not so strict.

One of the principal causes of vagrancy is almsgiving. An Act passed in the reign of Henry VIII. decreed that any one who gave money to a beggar was to be fined. If the public could only be induced to give up indiscriminate almsgiving, vagrancy on the vast scale it now assumes would be impossible. The habitual tramp, and I use this term to distinguish him from the common tramp, is the aristocrat of vagrants. Though not clothed in purple and fine linen, he fares sumptuously every day; for he says it is a bad street where he could not get a penny, and as he could do at least sixty streets a day, it was possible to earn £2 or £3 a week. I need not remind you there is a kind of Freemasonry amongst them. They find out everything about the charitable, where to beg, and how to beg!

So far I am sure you will say, with the Irishman, that two-thirds of what you have heard is not new, and the other half you have heard before.

We now come to the consideration of a remedy. In order to prevent tramps wandering about and bringing up their children in idleness and vice, it is necessary to strike at the root of the present system, and to abolish the casual ward altogether. This you will say is a very sweeping reform; but let us look at the results.

The habitual tramp would not suffer, as he lives in a lordly manner on the alms he begs, and goes to the lodging-house.

The common tramp, who is always seeking work, and never finding it, posing as an unemployed (unemployable would be a better name), would be affected. There might be a little hardship at first, but as it is a maxim of the Poor Law administration that no one



is allowed to starve in this country, the police could be empowered to give him a ticket either for a lodging-house or a night's lodging in a police cell. On the morrow, if he had no good excuse for tramping the police would send him back to his place of settlement. If he came from Bradford, for instance, he would be sent back there. If he made out a good case that he was searching for work, the police would give him a way-ticket to his place of destination. These way-tickets would enable the police to form a Registration of Tramps which would be most useful in the detection of crime. Some one may say, But this is an interference with the liberty of the subject. Society, however, asks to be protected against the common tramp, therefore a little restraint is necessary. The tendency of modern legislation is in this direction, *e.g.*, the Habitual Drunkards Act passed last session, though not on all fours with this question of tramps, imposes a certain amount of restraint. The effect of this would be to make the tramp stop in one place more than he does, and consequently his children might be educated. Of course there would be no coercion to compel him to stop in the Workhouse. He could leave whenever he liked to do so. The labour he did there might be rewarded by a graduated scale of diet—the more work he did, the better his food would be. Possibly this might lessen the tramp's dislike to work. Labour agencies might be established, so that an employer of labour, requiring work such as a tramp could do, might apply at the Workhouses.

Lastly come *bona-fide* working-men in search of work. These are very few in number, but deserve our earnest consideration.

Sir Hugh Owen, the Secretary to the Local Government Board, says: "It is admitted by all who have any practical experience of the class of persons relieved in the casual wards, that but a very small proportion of their number are really travelling for the purpose of obtaining work, or other adequate reason."

A Local Government Inspector states that at least 90 per cent. of the men on the road are professional beggars, and nothing else; and an eminent writer on Poor Law matters says in the course of an experience extending over a number of years, he has not met half-a-dozen genuine workmen on the road.

The question presents itself, Would there be any hardship to these few *bona-fide* working-men? Most of them belong to Trades Unions, and the Local Secretary would give either money or food and lodging to men on tramp. Some of the Benefit Societies have also travelling funds; and if the casual ward were done away with, this plan would no doubt be extended to almost all the well-known trades. There might be a few exceptional cases left, but they would be less than 5 per cent. The police might give these a ticket for a lodging-house, and a way-ticket to help them on the road. This way-ticket would protect an honest working-man, but would afford an easy means of detecting the tramp.

This proposed remedy would remove the bitter complaint amongst

workmen that under the present system they have to waste their time in the casual ward instead of seeking work, and in doing labour which often unfits them for their own trade.

In conclusion, the reclaiming of the tramp is doubtless a very knotty problem. I have put my ideas before you very crudely and imperfectly, and I must confess they appear to me somewhat drastic, but my excuse must be that there are men born and brought up in this country whose lives are narrowed to the environments of the casual ward. This, I think, appeals to us very forcibly for a remedy and an effectual remedy; and desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Our present methods do not seem to supply this remedy therefore, is it not desirable to try a new plan?

I am convinced the attention of such an influential and powerful body as this Conference having been directed to the question, may produce the happiest results.

Mr STANFIELD added that the Chairman of the Wakefield Board of Guardians was unable to be present owing to illness, but they had with them Mr Moorhouse, the Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Mr WALTER MOORHOUSE (Wakefield), in the absence of their Chairman, accorded the representatives present an invitation to visit their new Workhouse Infirmary.

Mr R. H. VERNON WRAGGE, Barrister-at-law and Chairman of the York Board of Guardians; read a paper on "The Assessment of Property."

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*This paper is not printed here, where it would have appeared in the usual course, as Mr Wragge has notified the Publishers that he refuses his consent to their publishing his paper in the Report of the Proceedings of the Conference.*

*Mr Longbotham, the Honorary Secretary to the Conference, requested Mr Wragge to allow his*

*paper to appear, but Mr Wragge persisting in his refusal, the Publishers had no option but to strike out the paper, which was already in type. Pages 366 to 380 are therefore omitted.*

*This has caused delay in the publication of the Proceedings, which the Publishers regret they were unable to avoid.*

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### DISCUSSION.

Mr LLOYD GREAME (Sowerby) wished to ask Mr Wragge about tied houses. He said that Mr Wragge said that trade was not to be taken into account, and yet he said they were to try to find out what loss of discount and so forth resulted from a house being tied. Then there was the more difficult question of country houses occupied by the owner. Supposing a house had never been let, what were they to do? Were they to consider what rent it would realise as an unfurnished house, without shooting or sporting rights. In many cases the owner would not take such a house on hire, but a much smaller one. What was the fair way to assess such property? Many such houses were rated on what seemed low rentals, but which were far beyond what the owner could get in the market.

Mr W. CLAPHAM (Keighley) asked whether, in the revaluation of York, rental was the basis.

Mr C. FITTON (Huddersfield) said that Mr Wragge maintained that machinery which was necessary to make the premises rent-earning must be taken into account in assessing the value of the property. He wished to know whether a lawyer's library was rateable. (Cheers and laughter.) They were on a wrong basis altogether if they took into account any chattels. In rating shops, did they value the shop fittings and the counter? Certainly not; neither did they value the chairs, tables, and beds in assessing a hotel.

Mr J. H. FISHER (Sculcoates) said that in his Union they had had several important public-house appeals, which would shortly come before the Courts, and he would therefore refrain from commenting



upon them. There had been considerable difficulty about the rating of country mansions. Mr Wragge laid too much stress upon the importance of the functions of assessment committees, which were really Courts of first instance, and had nothing to do with the value, except as presented to them by the overseers on the one side and the owner on the other. In his Union they never interfered with the rating of properties except it became necessary to send their duly qualified valuer to go into the matter.

Mr MOORHOUSE (Wakefield) regretted that Mr Wragge had not gone into the question of collieries. They had had cases in that district where colliery companies had claimed to be assessed amount of their profits. He would be glad to give his views on that question, and also as to the percentage operated most owners, as

BAD PAGINATION

...ing capacity of the premises. He did not agree with Mr Fitton that a lawyer's library ought to be rated. (Laughter.) The law on most rating questions was most unsettled, and he was of opinion that it should be more in the nature of a royalty on the output than a percentage on the rent, for a mine or a brickfield might be worked out in a very short time. The whole art of rating was summed up in the words, "What is the place worth from year to year?" (Hear, hear.)

The Conference then adjourned, and the members were conveyed in waggonettes to inspect the infirmary and other premises now being built for the Wakefield Board of Guardians. Miss Wilkie read the following paper on their return to the Town Hall.

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Mr WELLSMITH (Sheffield) contended that it was unfair to fix a hard and fast scale of allowances off the gross for house property. In the case of a thrifty man, who had built his own house with £200 of his own and £400 borrowed from a building society, the house often did not represent more than an outlay of £20 a year to him, and he ought to be assessed upon that, and not upon, say, £30.

Mr WRAGGE, in reply, dealt first with Mr Greame's point, and said that the fact that the gentry lived in mansions must be taken as evidence that they were not at all eager to take small houses, and where such mansions had never been let, they must be compared with other property of a similar character. They must consider the cost of the property and what a person would reasonably pay for it from year to year. Mr Clapham inquired whether they at York had valued on rent as a basis. They had not. They had merely treated the rental as *primâ facie* evidence from which to start with the valuation. Mr Fitton took him to task with reference to the rating of machinery. The circumstances were entirely different between fixed plant and machinery necessary to command the rent, and chattels which the tenant could remove at any time without injury to the rent-earning capacity of the premises. He did not agree with Mr Fitton that a lawyer's library ought to be rated. (Laughter.) The law on most rating questions was most unsettled, and he was of opinion that it should be more in the nature of a royalty on the output than a percentage on the rent, for a mine or a brickfield might be worked out in a very short time. The whole art of rating was summed up in the words, "What is the place worth from year to year?" (Hear, hear.)

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## THE NURSING OF THE SICK POOR.

BY MISS C. B. S. WILKIE,

*Lady Superintendent of the Halifax Workhouse Infirmary.*

YEAR by year the question of the nursing of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmaries has been brought under the notice of Conferences, and with the years the aspect of the question has altered. In its earliest presentments the necessity for trained nursing was the point upon which conviction was needed. When that was attained the position and treatment of the nurses became the matter of the moment; and to-day the consideration of the question of the inadequate supply of nurses qualified to fulfil the requirements of the Nursing Order of 1897, is of paramount and vital importance.

That Order, like so many others, does not go to the root of the evils. It merely suggests palliative treatment. It is weak. It forces slight improvements on existing conditions, but the Local Government Board fails to recognise its responsibility for these conditions, or its responsibility and power in the alteration of a state of affairs admittedly wrong.

The *Times* inquires, in an article published 22nd December 1897: "Where are the nurses now to come from for the carrying on of Poor-Law work? . . . The effect of the new Order will be to make the demand for trained nurses for Infirmaries greater than ever, and now that the Workhouse Infirmary Nurses' Association has stopped work, it is thought that the Local Government Board will be compelled to take some definite action in the matter. There is reason to believe that that body has not sufficiently realised the difficulty in the way of securing competent nurses for Workhouse Infirmaries under present conditions; but the question arises whether the Central Poor Law Authority will not now be forced to establish some system of its own for the training of nurses for Poor

Law services as it already does for the Army and Navy, and at the same time to re-organise the whole system as regards the status of the nurses when they have been trained."

The *Lancet*, in its issue of 11th December 1897, remarks: "There is no doubt that the time has now come when the Central Authority shall take up the matter of organising a Training School for Workhouse Nurses, and for introducing reform as regards increased salaries, pensions, regulations for duty, and the like, so as to constitute a separate and more attractive service of its own on the same lines as has been recently done in the Army and Navy."

These suggestions and hopes have not yet been realised. To any one practically interested in the care of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmaries (a care which should not be limited to their bodies), the need of a radical change must be very apparent,—a change, which, to be thorough, must be revolutionary; which must clear away abuses, root and branch; and replace an inefficient system with one which shall provide in entirety for the needs of the patients and the nurses. Alteration to meet one or another of these needs will not suffice. The alteration should meet all needs.

In order to induce you to give your attention and influence to the desirability of a revolutionary change, it is necessary to point out to you that the present system is unsound in principle and defective in operation; that it leads to a serious amount of wrong; and to lay before you just and reasonable proposals, which, if carried out with completeness, would be effective in operation.

A primary consideration is the nurse. What is the qualification for a trained nurse? To such a question there is no satisfactory reply. It is a matter of opinion,—opinion as various as are the knowledge and capacity of the multitude. There is no standard. Every hospital sets its own. There is neither uniformity

of training nor of standard of attainment. Is that not a fundamental error? An error which might, and ought to be remedied without delay.

Why should the Local Government Board not constitute a Nursing Department, worked by a Committee formed of professional and lay members. A Committee which should formulate a general scheme of training in detail, and which should be an examining body. All examination questions should emanate from that source. Examinations should be held at fixed intervals, and all papers of answers should be returned to, and judged at, headquarters.

The age at which probationers would be received to be decided by the Department. Each Nursing School should have the choice of candidates for that school, but such candidates only to be admitted on three months' trial at certain stated periods, after satisfying the requirements of the examining body as to their general knowledge.

The time of training should be fixed at four years. During the first two of these years no salary should be paid, board, lodging, washing, and uniform should be provided, and training fees should be charged. Why should a nurse receive training at no monetary cost—on the contrary, gain to herself, while a medical student has to pay for all his knowledge. Knowledge paid for is generally valued.

In order that otherwise suitable women should not be debarred from entering the service, scholarships should be established, the funds for the provision of such scholarships to be acquired by capitation grants to each training school. Prizes and medals should be given for proficiency; but not for proficiency in theoretical work alone. In connection with the Nursing Department there should be a staff of Nursing Inspectors who would visit, inspect the hospitals, and examine the probationers in practical work, such examinations to be on regular and fixed lines, at regular



and fixed periods. Certificates of a definite value should be granted by the Department to probationers according to merit and proficiency, at the end of two years.

In the succeeding two years further development of character and powers of management and organisation should be specially encouraged. A salary should be paid during these two years. The question of all salaries should be one under the control of the Central Authority, who would also be required to draw up general and detailed rules for use in all the Infirmarys.

The Matron of such Training Schools should be selected with much care. Influence should be no factor in their selection; they should be chosen on account of their special fitness for such posts. They should be women of great moral and mental force, able to judge and develop character, women of great personal influence, with an infinite capacity for taking pains, self-reliant and self-controlled, and with an unlimited fund of enthusiasm.

Such a scheme, if carried out, would put the training and certification of nurses on a definite basis. There would be a standard of training, and a standard of proficiency.

But it may be asked: How would the establishment of the training and certification of nurses on definite lines help the smaller Workhouse Infirmarys to solve the difficulty of the supply of nurses? Only in so far that a certificate would have the definite value it at present lacks. The supply might be guaranteed under a scheme by which the smaller Workhouse Infirmarys would be worked in association with the larger ones.

Miss Gibson of the Birmingham Workhouse Infirmary read a paper last May at the West Midland District Poor Law Conference, in which she suggested that the large training schools might train for the smaller Workhouses. But the nurses sent out from

the large schools, as at present constituted, would find the same monotony and difficulties in the small Workhouse Infirmaries as are found by the nurses who now take such appointments only to give them up after a short time. The fact that the nurses were under agreement with a Central Authority, as Miss Gibson suggests, would not make the conditions less irksome. Isolation means to so great an extent helplessness.

But the difficulty might be overcome by grouping the Infirmaries in districts, counties, or parts of counties, but districts whose limits would have to be defined by expert knowledge. Such districts must each have within them an Infirmary properly equipped in all respects, which would be a training school for the district. Nurses would be sent out from that school in turn to the smaller Infirmaries just as they would be sent from ward to ward in the Training School. The nursing of the whole district would be under one control and would be raised to the same level. The nurse sent to a small country Infirmary would know that the monotony was only a temporary thing, and the nursing would have to be as well done as if she were in the wards of the Central Infirmary, and if under less favourable circumstances she probably would find her powers of self-reliance and resource develop. She would learn adaptability. She would be imbued with the best tradition of her school, and would bring some of the influences of her larger life to bear on the more narrow life of the small isolated Infirmary.

The whole cost of Poor Law nursing—salaries, maintenance, grants, travelling expenses—should be borne by the Nursing Department, who should receive a rate, proportionate to the number of sick for whom provision was made, from each parish or Union, and would from that source meet all the cost involved in the provision and maintenance of a recognised system of training and nursing. Or the financial arrange-

ments might be altogether—as it is now partially—left in the hands of the County Councils.

That immense trouble would be involved in the department of the details of such schemes, that the initial cost might be high, that there would be many prejudices and obstacles of one kind and another to overcome, is unquestionable. But that reform is a necessity is as unquestionable. Would the schemes suggested make for the necessary reform?

It is almost impossible within the limits of a paper so large and general in its subject, to enter into details,—details calling for the consideration of experts, candid and reasonable men and women, who will bring a large and generous perception to bear on the condition and possibilities of the nursing of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmary.

The problem has to be faced. It should be faced boldly, and it would be if the hearts of all Guardians and Poor Law Authorities could be stirred by the thought of the sick, the lonely, neglected sick, who spend their lives within the same walls day after day, year after year, tended often by selfish, careless, uninterested hands, here to-day and gone to-morrow, free to flee the monotony, which must be endured by the sufferers, perhaps but ill in the early days, but bound to them by the cords of pain and helplessness.

Do the suggestions embodied in this paper meet the difficulties of the existing state of affairs? Would not a definite and recognised system of training elevate the status of nurses, raise the whole tone of the profession, and would not the minor difficulties of the place and treatment generally of the Workhouse Infirmary nurse, disappear?

The scheme suggested is not Utopian; it is a practical, working scheme which ought, and which eventually will, be carried out, possibly not strictly on the lines here laid down, but most certainly on the main principle.



It would be useless to attempt to induce this Conference to express their approval and adherence to these schemes by any personal persuasion. If you can be induced to support them it will only be by the unimpeachable evidence you must all have of the absolute necessity for alteration in the existing conditions.

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### DISCUSSION.

The BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD said he would like to associate himself in the welcome to Wakefield of the Conference. The work the Guardians were engaged in was one that appealed to the hearts of all, and of none more than the clergy, who were brought into contact with the poorest class of the community, and the clergy had great sympathy with those who were engaged in bringing to bear the essential principles of the Gospel of Christ upon the lives of those who were least fortunately situated in the world. There was no calling which offered scope for more noble work than that of a Poor Law Guardian or officer. He trusted that while they were ever striving to relieve the necessitous, they would be also endeavouring to remove the causes of poverty. (Cheers.)

Mr J. W. TILLOTSON (Halifax) said he had himself had the pleasure of working with Miss Wilkie in the great reforms she had helped to carry out, and therefore he felt it his duty to say a few words on the paper. Miss Wilkie was nothing if not thorough. She liked her own way, and generally got it, and if she found any place more perfect than her own she tried to equal if not to surpass it. They were face to face with the question of the inadequate supply of nurses. Many places now possessed training schools, but what would the smaller places do to obtain a supply where there was not a resident medical officer, for a certificate from such places at present was practically worthless under the regulations of the Local Government Board. He feared Miss Wilkie was aiming at too much centralisation, and it also seemed to him the wrong time, when they were short of nurses, to talk of demanding two years' gratuitous service. (Loud cheers.) At the same time the scheme was one well worthy of the most careful consideration. Perhaps a few experts like Miss Gibson, of Birmingham—(cheers)—and Miss Wilkie, could, with the help of the Poor Law Unions Association, formulate a definite and useful scheme on the subject. (Cheers.)

Mr T. A. GUY (Bradford) said he appreciated the paper, but had great doubts whether it comprised a practicable scheme. Uniformity was all very well, but belief in good systems carried on independently was much better. (Hear, hear.) Many of the Workhouse hospitals were superior to the great general hospitals—(hear, hear)—and might

be used for training nurses for Poor Law work. He believed that it would be better to have a number of large institutions, properly equipped, even if it necessitated moving the patients a little further to get to them. This matter of nursing reform must not be allowed to be left entirely to the Local Government Board, or it would end in failure. (Hear, hear.) The large Unions in Yorkshire had of late years made great strides in this matter. (Cheers.)

Mrs LAWTON (Sculcoates) said there was a much simpler plan of training nurses than that suggested in the paper. All that was required was a good head nurse who could co-operate with a sympathetic medical officer. She did not agree with asking any one to work for nothing for two years. (Cheers.)

Mr THOS. SPEAK (Driffild) said that though to a great extent he endorsed the opinion of Miss Wilkie, that the large Workhouses in the towns should be made the training institutions for the smaller Workhouses, if they had centralisation they would have nurses who would be a long time coming, and who would be quite beyond their control when they came. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs PICKARD (Knaresborough) said that the reason of the short supply of nurses was that Guardians were afraid of the ratepayers, and underpaid those valuable servants. A central scheme such as Miss Wilkie suggested would, she thought, be successful, but they must not try to work it at the expense of the young probationer by requiring her to work a couple of years for nothing. (Cheers.)

Miss WILKIE, in reply, said she did not approve of carrying sick persons a long distance to a central institution. She reiterated the principal points in her paper, and concluded by thanking the members for the reception of it.

It was resolved to hold the next Conference at Harrogate, although the Hull and Sculcoates delegates extended a hearty invitation to the Conference to go to the great East Coast port.

The Committee was re-elected, with the addition of the Chairman and Clerk of the Knaresborough Union.

The PRESIDENT intimated that the Hon. Secretary (Mr Arthur T. Longbotham) wished to resign. It would be a great misfortune to lose him, he was so very capable and courteous. (Cheers.)

Mr FITTON said they would have immense difficulty in finding any one nearly as good as Mr Longbotham. He begged him to retain office for another year. He moved that Mr Longbotham be asked to act again.

This was seconded in several places, and warmly supported by Mr Beaumont (Wakefield).

Mr ARTHUR T. LONGBOTHAM, who was cordially greeted on rising, said he had held office for six years, and though he was much obliged to the Conference, the duties took up more time than he was now able to afford. He would take office for another year on the understanding that a successor was found in the meanwhile, and ready at the next Conference.

Mr FITTON moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr Longbotham for consenting to take office for another year, and for his past services. Those who had been in contact with Mr Longbotham knew how efficiently he performed whatever he took in hand. (Cheers.)

The resolution was carried with acclamation.

Rev. G. E. Aspinall (Halifax), Mr Fitton (Huddersfield), and Mr Lawson (Leeds) were unanimously elected representatives on the Central Committee.

Mr RIGBY then read the following paper :—

## THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF GUARDIANS OF THE POOR.

By E. A. RIGBY, Esq.,

*Clerk to the Guardians of the Huddersfield Union.*

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THE first reference to the office of Guardian of the Poor in the laws of England appears in the statute 22 Geo. III., c. 83, commonly known as Gilbert's Act. That statute marks a distinct era in the history of the English Poor Law, seeing that it was the first general attempt to separate the duty of collecting from that of distributing the poor rate. It provided for the combination of several parishes into a Union, and for the appointment of paid officers charged with the duty of managing the Workhouse and distributing relief. These officials were styled respectively "Guardians of the Poor," and "Governors of the Poorhouse." They were nominated by the vestry, and appointed and their salaries fixed by at least two Justices of the Peace. The Act was permissive in its character, and, possibly owing to certain retrograde and vicious principles it contained, was only partially adopted. In 1834 there were 67 Unions formed under the Act, embracing 924 parishes out of say 14,000.

Everybody knows that by the beginning of the third decade of the present century, the state of the administration of the Poor Laws of this country had become so desperate as to excite general anxiety and



alarm, and in 1832 a Royal Commission was appointed to make inquiry into the operation of the laws for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, and report their opinion as to the alterations, amendments, or improvements which might be made in the laws, or in the manner of administering them.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was the outcome of that Royal Commission, and as the enactments therein made are the foundation of the present Poor Law system, it is absolutely necessary that we should comprehend its salient features. Now the principal feature of that statute was the creation of a central authority styled "The Poor Law Commissioners," and into their hands was committed the control and regulation of the Poor Law administration of the country. They were authorised and required to make rules, orders, and regulations for the management of the poor, government of Workhouses, the education of poor children, and the guidance and control of all Guardians, vestries, and parish officers, so far as relates to the management or relief of the poor. Section 38 provided that where a Union is formed, a Board of Guardians of the Poor for such Union shall be constituted and chosen, and the Workhouse shall be governed, and the relief of the poor in such Union shall be administered, by such Board of Guardians. The Commissioners are to determine the number, and prescribe the duties of the Guardians.

By section 54 it is provided that the ordering, giving, and directing of all relief to the poor (except in certain specified cases), shall be under the government and control of the Guardians of the Poor. Parliament thus enacted that the Workhouse should be governed and the relief of the poor administered by the Board of Guardians. It at the same time enacted that the central authority should make the rules and regulations by which the Guardians must act; and these General

Orders of the Commissioners, the Poor Law Board, and the Local Government Board, issued from time to time by these bodies by virtue of these powers conferred by Parliament, and forming a very compendious volume, have all the authority and force of an Act of Parliament itself. It is not surprising that a law so contrary to English ideas, principles, and methods, was received, especially here in the north, with bitter and determined opposition. The people strongly resented and resisted such complete subjection to a small central outside body, in respect of the administration of their local affairs; and it is more than probable that if such a measure were to be introduced into Parliament to-day, it would be met with such a storm of opposition as would prevent it from ever passing into law; but a desperate disease required a strong remedy, and its greatest justification is its success.

Before considering in any detail the powers of Guardians, a word or two may perhaps not unfittingly be devoted to a brief sketch of the manner in which the duties of Guardians of the Poor have been gradually extended and enlarged.

Under the Act of 1834 the duties of Guardians were restricted to the administration of relief and the government of the Workhouse, but it was soon realised that the Unions of parishes formed under the Act provided convenient areas, and brought together bodies of men capable of dealing with other matters of local government, and for a period of years, the Legislature, as occasion offered, added to the duties and services which the Guardian Boards had to render. Thus in 1836, the Act providing for the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, placed the duty of forming suitable registrars' districts upon the Guardians. In the same year an Act was passed (6 & 7 Wm. IV., cap. 96), authorising Guardians, under certain circumstances, to appoint a fit person to make a

new survey and valuation of property in their Union for assessment purposes; and in 1862 the Union Assessment Committee Act was passed, constituting the Guardians, acting through the Assessment Committee, the rating authority for the Union area.

In 1840, the Guardians were, by the Act 3 & 4 Vict., c. 29, directed to contract with their medical officers for the vaccination of all persons resident in such Unions, and in making such arrangements, they were to conform to the regulations of the Poor Law Commissioners. This was the first of a series of statutes which have placed the administration of the vaccination laws under the supervision of the Guardian Boards.

By the 5 & 6 Vict., c. 57 (1842), Guardians and their Relieving Officers were endowed with the same powers as Overseers, with respect to the removal of lunatics to the asylums, and thus had laid upon them another important branch of work.

The Act 7 & 8 Vict., c. 33, directed Guardians to receive and pay precepts for county rates, and the same statute made some important changes as to Assistant Overseers and collectors of poor rates, many Boards of Guardians being authorised to appoint these officers for the parishes within their Unions.

The Public Health Act, 1875, constituted Guardian Boards the rural sanitary authority in certain districts, and the carrying out of the laws with regard to the compulsory attendance of children at elementary schools in parishes where no School Board has been formed, has been laid upon the same broad and willing shoulders.

The most recent addition to the Guardians' multifarious duties has been the Infant Life Protection Act of last year.

Let us now proceed to consider the powers and duties of Guardians of the Poor.



*I. First as regards the administration of the laws relating to the relief of the Poor.*

These powers and duties are of two classes :—

(a.) Under Statute, and

(b.) Under the Orders issued by the Local Government Board, and its predecessors.

(a.) The powers of Guardians under Statute Law with regard to the relief of the poor are very few, but of these the two sections of the Act of 1834, already referred to, are most important. By virtue of these sections, it is clear the duty of administering the Poor Law in any district must be discharged by the Board of Guardians. If for some conceivable reason the Local Government Board were to dissolve a Union, they would have to reconstitute another one to carry out the law ; they have no power to distribute relief themselves, and they have no authority to attach the administration of the Poor Law to any other public body. Parliament alone is equal to this task, inasmuch as that authority has expressly enacted that the relief of the poor shall be the function of Boards of Guardians.

By section 15 the Commissioners are expressly precluded from “interfering in any individual case for the purpose of ordering relief.”

By section 38 it is provided “that no Guardian shall have power to act in virtue of such office, except as a member, and at a meeting of such Board.”

The Guardians are also authorised to accept, take, and hold property, real or personal, for the benefit of their Union, and may bring actions, and prefer indictments in respect of such property, or on any contracts and securities given to them in virtue of their office.

The 10 & 11 Vict., c. 109, s. 23, relates “to the case of any two persons being husband and wife, both of whom shall be above the age of sixty years, received into any Workhouse, such two persons shall

not be compelled to live separate and apart from each other in such Workhouse, and by virtue of 39 & 40 Vict., c. 61, s. 10, when any two persons being husband and wife shall be admitted into any Workhouse, and either of them shall be infirm, sick, or disabled by any injury, or above the age of sixty years, it shall be lawful for the Guardians to permit in their discretion, such husband and wife to live together."

The 12 & 13 Vict., c. 103, s. 20, authorises Guardians to expend, with the order and subject to the rules and regulations of the Poor Law Board, any sum of money not exceeding £10 for each person in and about the emigration of poor persons having settlements within the Union.

The 25 & 26 Vict., c. 43, gives power to send children to certain schools partly maintained by public subscription and certified by the Local Government Board.

By 30 & 31 Vict., c. 106, s. 21, it is enacted the Guardians may provide for the reception, maintenance, and instruction of any adult pauper being blind, or deaf and dumb, in any Hospital or Institution established for the reception of persons suffering under such infirmities.

There are other statutes which authorise the payment of expenses which may be incurred in legal processes, undertaken by the auditor and otherwise, and others again which deal with the borrowing and repayment of loans, &c.

The Poor Law Act, 1889, 52 & 53 Vict., c. 56, gives power to Guardians to assume the powers and rights of parents of deserted children, and is a most valuable statute.

(b.) The functions and procedure of Guardians in the distribution of relief are regulated by the Orders of the Local Government Board to a most minute degree. The General Consolidated Order, 24th July 1847, prescribes regulations as to Guardians' meetings and the

order of their proceedings, contracts, government of the Workhouse, classification of paupers, their discipline and diet, clothing, amusement, religious ministrations, employment and punishment. It provides for appointment, and defines the duties of Workhouse visiting committees. It regulates the appointment of officers, and sets out their duties and qualifications.

The distribution of out-relief is regulated by two Orders—one the Prohibitory, 21st December 1844, principally in force in agricultural and rural Unions, and which forbids out-relief to be given to able-bodied persons; and the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, 14th December 1852, in force in most of the large urban districts, and which sanctions out relief to able-bodied persons under strict conditions, the chief of which are the imposition of a task of work, and the relief being given half in money and half in food, fuel, or articles of absolute necessity. Other important Orders deal with the books and accounts to be kept by the several officers, and with nearly every phase of the Guardians' work. The functions of Guardians under this head may be divided into three classes: (1) To decide upon all applications for relief, and to take the necessary measures to carry out such decisions; (2) To exercise a constant supervision over the administration of relief, and the establishments in which the paupers are maintained; and (3) To provide as far as necessary for the appointment of paid officers.

(1.) Under the first head the powers of Guardians are very large, and their discretion great, and for the right discharge of this duty they need qualities by no means common; the first and most important of these being the judicial capacity, the qualities of judgment and discernment, skill to weigh evidence and distinguish between the plausible tale of the thriftless and unworthy, and the simple recital of the needy and unfortunate. Probably there never was a time when there were so many loafers infesting our towns and



cities, whose chief aim is to live without labour of their own upon the toil and industry of others, and, as a consequence, there never was so much need of constant vigilance and discrimination in order to checkmate and correct the efforts of this class. On the other hand it is equally certain that there never was a period, when as a consequence, perhaps, of the fierce rush and strain of competition, there were more breakdowns, wrecks and derelicts on the sea of life. For the one class there should be nothing but the coldest and sternest justice, but for the other, those who have honestly striven their best and failed, every possible kindness and consideration which the law allows should be manifested.

Obviously this ideal can only be realised by a diligent and painstaking devotion to duty on the part of those who may be charged with the guardianship of the poor, by taking a real interest in the cases brought up for consideration, and by an earnest endeavour to grasp the principles of the law and apply them to each particular case.

(2.) To ensure relief being strictly limited to the class for whom it is intended, it is very necessary that those who are entrusted with the administration of the law should, by diligent and minute inquiry, ascertain the precise condition and circumstances of each applicant, and to do this effectually it is essential that competent and painstaking Relieving Officers should be employed, and they should be required to visit the homes of persons in receipt of relief at frequent intervals, and their reports ought to be submitted to and considered by the Guardians at like periods. Orders for out-relief ought not to be given for longer than three months, and every case should be carefully scrutinised and fresh up-to-date information be supplied when it comes up for revision.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Guardians' duties in the consideration of

applications for relief, and in the supervision of its administration, and to carry out the suggestions made will necessitate a large expenditure of time and patience; but the effect upon a parish or a district would be most beneficial, and it would be an effective way of complying with one great canon of experience, viz., to so administer the law that poverty shall be relieved, whilst pauperism is checked and discouraged. One is disposed to think that it would not be amiss if in every relief committee or board room some of the recognised principles of administration were to be clearly printed and conspicuously displayed, such as, "The function of the Guardians is the relief of actual destitution," and "The condition of the pauper ought to be, on the whole, less eligible than that of the independent labourer."

(3.) The appointment of suitable officers is also of the utmost importance. Probably Boards of Guardians are no worse than other Boards in this matter, and are carried away by the pertinacity, or private influence, or personal appearance of an applicant; whilst past service, its duration and character, have little or no weight. I would urge, however, that as in our Poor Law system so much depends upon the officials, it is supremely important that in their selection the utmost pains should be taken to secure men and women thoroughly qualified for their work, and when a good officer has been secured, he ought to be made to feel that he has the confidence of his Board. A good Relieving Officer, a good Master or Matron, wise, discriminating, judicious, is a pearl of great price, and despite the large numbers of applicants for these positions, one may say advisedly they are not to be picked up at every street corner. Assuming that good men have been appointed to these positions, Guardians should see that they do their duty.

Under the Orders their functions are clearly defined, and faithful officers will welcome a real interest

in their work on the part of the members of the Board. May I add, good officers are careful not to encroach upon the functions and prerogatives of Guardians, and *per contra*, good Guardians do not burden themselves with the duties of officials? One has sometimes been astonished to find Guardians acting as amateur Relieving Officers, and either making themselves the advocates or the determined opponents of particular applicants for relief, thus stepping down from the pedestal upon which the law has placed them, and assuming and accepting a position on quite a different plane, thus divesting themselves of the office and position of judge, and assuming that of keen partisans and contestants in the arena below.

II. Let us turn now to a brief consideration of the *miscellaneous powers and duties which rest upon Guardians in relation to matters outside the Poor Law*. These obviously have all been bestowed by Parliament for the reason already stated.

1. Under the Acts for the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, the Guardians appoint the Superintendent Registrar, and the several Registrars of Births and Deaths as vacancies arise, and this must be done within fourteen days of the vacancy, or the patronage lapses to the Registrar-General. In the event of any changes or alterations being desirable, the Guardians' assent to such alterations is necessary. It is their duty to pay out of their common fund the fees for registration work, and they have to provide and uphold the Superintendent Registrar's office. They have no power or control over the registrars, who are answerable alone to the Registrar-General, but any representations made to that gentleman by the Guardians have exceptional weight and influence.

2. Under the Vaccination Acts, the Guardians are constituted the local authority for administering these Acts. Inasmuch as the new Vaccination Order is



now under the consideration of the various Boards, it is scarcely necessary to say much on this point. It may suffice to point out that Guardian Boards are required to appoint public vaccinators throughout their areas, and pay them according to a minimum scale laid down. They must also appoint vaccination officers whose duty it is to see that the law is complied with. If the vaccination officer does not do his duty, it will be the Guardians' duty to report his neglect to the Local Government Board.

3. Under the Union Assessment Committee Acts, Guardians are directed to appoint an Assessment Committee, and this Committee is the authority for rating purposes in the Union. It has power to order valuations and revaluations either of an entire parish, or the whole of the Union, or of specific classes of property or individual assessments. The Committee must approve and sign every valuation list before a rate can be laid in accordance therewith. It also constitutes a rating court to which ratepayers and Overseers may appeal with regard to the assessment of any item in the valuation lists. Its functions are obviously of the greatest importance in a commercial community, and it would be difficult to overestimate the value of its services to the Union. Any one inclined to depreciate or undervalue the position of a Poor Law Guardian, would do well to attend a meeting of the Committee, or attempt otherwise to ascertain the nature of the work done there, and they would receive an object-lesson which they would probably not soon forget. The thousands of appeals dealt with annually, and the very limited number of cases taken to the Courts, are evidence of the patient, impartial, and fair manner in which the business is transacted, and *prima facie* ground for contending that in any revision of the complex subject of rating, their functions ought to be extended and not restricted.

4. Guardians' duties under the Education Acts are

chiefly confined to the appointment of a School Attendance Committee for parishes under 5,000 inhabitants, and where no School Board has been formed. The Committee have to take measures to secure the attendance of children at the public elementary schools, and this is done mainly through attendance officers, who are required to visit and persuade, if possible, the parents to comply with the law; where this course fails, summonses have to be issued, and the power of the Magistrates invoked. The Guardians had also duties with regard to the payment of school fees in certain cases, but through the action of the Free Education Act, these duties are now almost *nil*.

5. Under the Lunacy Acts the Guardians are charged with certain duties and powers, but these will be referred to shortly under another head.

6. *Duties and Powers with respect to Children.*—Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1894, the Guardians are empowered to take up and pay the expenses of prosecutions for offences under that Act. Thanks to the vigorous action of the Society which makes the working of this Act its chief business, Guardians have not been called on to take much action under these powers. It is, however, very desirable that the existence of these powers and duties should not be overlooked or forgotten.

Cruelty to children is not confined to towns and urban districts. Voluntary Societies have not that guarantee of permanence or the power behind them that a public body has, and it is most important that as occasion arises, the Guardians' functions under this head should be discharged.

The Infant Life Protection Act of last year placed upon Guardians the duty of carrying out its provisions. Happily one hears of very few cases in this district where its provisions apply, and unfortunately in practice its enactments are found to be far from perfect; nevertheless Guardians should see to it that it is not

allowed to become a dead letter or a useless addition to the Statute-book.

III. *The necessity of further powers being conferred upon Guardians of the Poor.*

There are several respects in which Guardians find their work hampered and hindered, and with regard to which it is most important that they should have further powers. At the North-Western Conference of 1896, Mr Moulding read a paper suggesting that further powers of detention should be obtained with reference to five classes of Workhouse inmates, and from a practical and common-sense point of view it is difficult to understand why, at least with reference to four of these classes, these powers should not at once be secured. His classes are as follows, viz. :—

1. “Women who can neither be classed nor detained as idiots or lunatics, but so feeble in mental power that outside they are easily led into immoral relations with men, and who enter the Workhouse from time to time either diseased or pregnant.”

2. “Women who are mentally strong, but have more than one illegitimate child, and whose history justifies the inference that they do not care to place any restraint upon their vicious propensities.”

3. “Men and women who have spent a great part of their life in gaol or the Workhouse.”

4. “Men and women who, by their vices, have brought on destitution and sickness, and have periodically to enter the Workhouse for treatment, and who, when well, discharge themselves to again repeat their conduct.”

5. “Cases not suffering from infectious disease, where, in spite of remonstrances, they insist upon discharging themselves before recovery, and who, in consequence, have again to enter the Workhouse.”

No doubt most of us have felt that the shelter and benefit of the Workhouse have been abused by some of the above classes, and that as matters now stand, a



wrong and an injury is being perpetrated upon the thrifty and provident, by allowing persons of the above descriptions to go in and out of our Workhouses as they do. Take the first and second classes, weak and immoral women, look over the records of your Workhouses, ascertain how many of the children chargeable in one way or another are their progeny ; confer with your Masters and Matrons, and you will be surprised to find what a large percentage of our pauperism springs from this source. Or consider the third class, commonly known as "ins-and-outs," for the most part strong, able-bodied men and women. It is no exaggeration to say that they are more familiar with Poor Law procedure than the average Guardian, they know how little to do when in the House, and when weary of its restraint and routine they take their discharge, and go sponging or loafing about the neighbourhood, and when the usual fountains of sympathy or benevolence have been drained, they coolly go to the Relieving Officer and demand an order and re-enter the House again. They are the *bête noire* of all Workhouse officials, and to check their devices and subterfuges one has to be constantly on the rack. Their presence in a well-ordered Workhouse is a source of pollution and contamination to the law-abiding and industrious poor. The Legislature ought to aid Boards of Guardians in dealing with this class, and by the setting-up, if need be, of farm colonies where such cases could be compulsorily detained and kept at hard labour, enable Guardians to cope with a serious and a growing evil.

There is also another class over which Guardians ought to have more power of control, *i.e.*, the various classes of children who pass through their hands. Happily, the subject of the treatment of the children under the Poor Law has of late years received a large amount of consideration, and Guardian Boards everywhere are becoming alive to the importance of dealing

with the children in a broad and generous spirit. It must, however, be borne in mind, that the Guardians' powers are very limited with respect to the majority of the children who come upon the rates. The children, who are in the Workhouse with their parents, can only be dealt with as the parent may permit. Children sent out as servants or apprentices are only under control so long as they are chargeable. Orphan children are in a like position, and it is often a serious obstacle in the way of securing a good home for a child, that no assurance can be given that some disagreeable parent will not turn up when the child has grown old enough to be of some little service in the home where it has been placed. Then there are the children of vagrants and professional mendicants, dragged mercilessly about from town to town and purposely exposed to inclement weather and caused needless suffering in order to excite the sympathies of passers-by. What powers or control have the Guardians, or any other authority, over these? Yet, if we would solve the problem of vagrancy, we must begin with the children and see to it that another generation is not being trained up to be loafers and wanderers on our streets and roads. I do not hesitate to express the opinion, that the nation would save on economical grounds alone, if every vagrant child were taken out of its parents' hands, and brought up at the expense of the State; and to this end I would make it penal to take children of tender years on tramping tours, unless the parent could satisfy a magistrate that there was a definite prospect of work in view, and all children soliciting alms in the street or from door to door, should be liable to be taken in charge by the Poor Law authorities and dealt with as they thought fit, the necessary cost being provided for by a grant from the Imperial Exchequer. I am aware that during the late session of Parliament a bill was promoted by a Yorkshire member with the object of

extending Guardians' powers in respect of the children, but from a variety of causes little or no progress was made, and the law is still unchanged.

Epileptics form another class, over whom it seems desirable that enlarged powers should be obtained. At present members of this unfortunate class are free to discharge themselves when they think fit, and the consequence is that if for any reason they become dissatisfied with their treatment, they discharge themselves and go out, and become a source of pain and annoyance to all respectable people, and objects of pity and commiseration to the unthinking crowd. Several of these cases have, during the past seven or eight years, been constantly in-and-out of our Workhouses; one of them has brought the science of how to annoy the officials and his fellow-inmates to a fine art, and yet the Guardians are practically powerless to deal with him. It ought to be enacted, that on the certificate of a medical man, a Justice of the Peace should be empowered to order the detention of cases of this kind for such periods as might be thought desirable. I would suggest that this subject of greater powers with regard to chargeable poor is one which the Government ought to be urged to take up, and that if Guardians generally would show more interest in the question, and more active earnestness in pressing the subject upon Members of Parliament, there is no reason why a Government measure should not be secured.

There are other matters in connection with the management of the Workhouse, for instance, in which Guardians' powers ought to be extended and enlarged. It seems unreasonable at this day that it should be necessary to obtain the Local Government Board's sanction to the supply of rations and accommodation to a probationer nurse without salary, and it is humiliating to find that if the Medical Officer, with the approval of the Guardians, requires the assistance of



another medical man in the performance of a critical operation on a hospital patient, the sanction of the Central Authority must be obtained before the necessary fee can be paid.

There were doubtless good reasons for the exercise of this close supervision and control sixty years ago, but surely some advance has been made, and with the strong light which beats upon the action of public bodies to-day, a little more freedom of action might be allowed. Much more might be said on this head, but time will not allow. May I, however, be permitted to recommend a very careful perusal of a paper read by Mr R. A. Leach of Rochdale at the North-Western Conference at Liverpool in October, in which the subject of control by the Local Government Board is freely discussed.

The Guardians' power ought to be extended with regard to pauper lunatics. At present the function of Guardians in this matter is restricted to paying the cost of removal and maintenance, of visiting cases chargeable to their Union, and of taking measures to transfer to other Unions cases which under the settlement laws can be shown to be chargeable thereto. The Relieving Officer is directed by statute to remove any lunatic to the asylum, and the Guardians can set apart one of their Relieving Officers for this work; beyond that their powers do not go. The County Council is charged with the duty of providing asylum accommodation, but, seeing that the payment for the maintenance of patients is made by the Guardians, it has been suggested that Guardians ought to have some share in the management of the asylums. The number of patients in the West Riding Asylums chargeable to the several Unions in that area on the 1st January last was 4,351; at 9s. 4d. per head per week, this means an annual payment to the County Council by the Unions in the West Riding of £105,584. 5s. 4d.; yet the Unions, as such, have no voice or share what-

ever in the management of these institutions, and if in any matter the Unions desire to approach the County Council or the Asylums Committee, it is entirely as a matter of grace and favour that they are heard. It ought not to need much argument to convince any fair-minded person that this is not equitable or just. Practically all the inmates of the asylums go through their hands ; in case of death or removal the particulars have to be reported, and seeing that the cost of maintenance has to be defrayed by the Guardian Boards, it is not too much to ask that they should have some representatives on the Board of Management of these institutions. Moreover, it is of the first importance for the interest of the community that Guardians should work in co-operation with the County Councils, by providing for as many harmless cases as they possibly can in their Workhouses, where the cost of maintenance is much less than in the asylum, and if the various Boards of Guardians had representatives on the Asylums Committee, it seems probable that they would be kept in touch with its needs and requirements, and there would be a permanent connecting link between the two. It may be pointed out that the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which is charged with the duty of providing and maintaining institutions for lunatics, &c., for the Metropolitan area, is composed of fifty-five members elected by the Boards of Guardians of the Metropolis, and eighteen members nominated by the Local Government Board. There are doubtless strong reasons why a different procedure should be followed in the provinces to that pursued in London, but the reasonableness of the Guardians' claims in this matter is so obvious, that some steps ought to be taken to have the point conceded. The question may be asked, Does the manner in which Guardians have discharged their duties hitherto justify the bestowment of the enlarged powers here claimed?

A careful survey of the whole field of operations will, I think, justify an affirmative answer. Boards of Guar-

dians may justly claim to have discharged their functions with such care and thoroughness as to render them worthy of further trust.

In conclusion may I express the opinion that the office of a Guardian of the Poor is one which any man or woman, desirous of serving his or her fellows, may justly aspire to fill? Although to a superficial observer the position may appear to be so shackled and restricted by rules and regulations as to be hardly worth undertaking, a closer scrutiny reveals, that in its influence for good or evil, there is no local office which has such potentialities.

The qualities which are indispensable to the making of a good Guardian are amongst the rarest and best which our nature can produce. Freedom from sentimentalism and impulsiveness, combined with sound common-sense, a warm heart united to a wise head, are essential in this sphere of public work. Besides this, every one who seeks to discharge this honourable function ought, at least, to familiarise himself with an outline of the successive attempts to deal with the various problems of pauperism in the past. The Poor Law is a growth, and every law, every rule or regulation, has its roots in the experience of the past, and it would be utter folly to ignore the lessons which that often painful and bitter experience has taught. Moreover, mistakes made in other departments of public life may have no worse result than the infliction of a temporary financial loss on the district in which they are made, but mistakes in the department of Poor Law relief may, on the one hand, cause dire pain and suffering to those who ought to be saved therefrom, or, on the other hand, may pauperise and degrade an entire community. Guardians deal with flesh and blood, not machines, with human beings, not brutes, and they have large powers and unlimited funds. It is in their power to find a haven of rest and peace for the aged and decrepit, and a refuge for such as have broken



down in the struggle of life ; they are able to help some to tide over the shallows which come in life's river. They may do much to build up an independent, thrifty, self-reliant, self-respecting people, or by lavish ill-considered relief, they may intensify and perpetuate the pauperism which they ought to strive to cure.

Time was when, in the popular mind, the Poor Law was synonymous with harshness and inhumanity, and in some places with downright cruelty ; happily it is not so now, and it is for the Guardians of to-day, by the faithful exercise of their powers and duties, to make it synonymous with justice to all combined with mercy to those in deepest need.

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### DISCUSSION.

Mr SCHOLEFIELD (Hemsworth) said he did not think it would be good policy for the Guardians to try to poach on the preserves of the County Councils, who were even now anxious to take some of their work from the Guardians.

Mr WELLSMITH (Sheffield) expressed the hope that Guardians would extend specially considerate treatment to members of friendly societies, and thus encourage thrift. (Hear, hear.)

Mr RIGBY said he did not agree that his paper proposed poaching on the preserves of the County Councils——

At this point the electric light, which had been eccentric for some little time, went out, and the debate was continued in absolute darkness. For some reason the sudden plunge into night excited great laughter.

Mr WRAGGE (York) proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor and Corporation for the loan of the hall.

Mr LONGBOTHAM (Hon. Secretary) seconded on behalf of the Committee of the Conference.

The MAYOR briefly thanked the members.

Mr SCHOLEFIELD proposed a vote of thanks to the President for the dignity and ability with which he had conducted the Conference.

This was seconded in several places, and carried unanimously.

The PRESIDENT having acknowledged the compliment, a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers, responded to by Mr Wragge, brought the proceedings to an end.

A banquet was given in the evening in the Town Hall.



## Eastern District.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ANNUAL POOR LAW CONFERENCE FOR THE COUNTIES  
OF ESSEX, SUFFOLK, AND NORFOLK, HELD AT THE  
MAID'S HEAD HOTEL, NORWICH, 24TH NOVEMBER  
1898.

*President*—Rev. W. PELHAM BURN, *Chairman of the  
Norwich Board of Guardians.*

The following Unions were represented at the Conference.

\* Guardians specially delegated by their Boards.

### ESSEX.

#### COLCHESTER—

- \*Bowles, G.
- \*Callaghan, W.
- \*Sewell, Mrs.
- \*White, C. E. (Clerk).

#### LEXDEN AND WINSTREE—

- \*Ashwin, Rev. Dr.
- \*Boggis, W. E.
- \*Green, Col.
- \*Thompson, C. H. (Clerk).

### NORFOLK.

#### AYLSHAM—

- Buxton, Mrs.
- \*Case, W.
- \*Hickling, J. S.
- \*Gidney, H. J. (Clerk).

#### BLOFIELD—

- \*Bowles, Mrs.
- \*Clark, Mrs.
- \*Cubitt, F. A.
- \*Garrick, J. P.

### NORFOLK—*continued.*

#### ERPINGHAM—

- \*Brigden, J. H.
- \*Edwards, G.
- Filch, Mrs.

#### EAST AND WEST FLEGG—

- \*Tacon, Rev. R. J.

#### FREEBRIDGE LYNN—

- \*Alvis, Rev. E. J.
- \*Holkes, G. B.

#### GUILTCROSS—

- Hose, T. C.

#### MITFORD AND LAUNDITCH—

- \*Hubbard, T. B.
- \*Hudson, J. P.
- \*Wilson, B.

#### MUTFORD AND LOTHINGLAND—

- \*Cooper, J.
- \*Mobbs, W.



NORFOLK—*continued.*

## NORWICH—

- \*Brooks, T.
- \*Cleverley, G.
- \*Crotch, F. J.
- \*Mallett, R. J.
- \*Woodward, E. L. (Clerk).

## ST FAITH'S—

- \*Atkinson, Rev. G. B.
- \*King, G.
- \*Warren, J. W.
- \*Row, C. (Clerk).

## SUFFOLK.

## BOSMERE AND CLAYDON—

- \*Burch, F. T. W.
- \*Shaw, Rev. H. J.

SUFFOLK—*continued.*

## HARTISMERE—

- Bond, J. (Clerk).

## IPSWICH—

- \*Sizer, A.
- \*Tozer, Rev. T. W.

## WANGFORD—

- \*Block, Mr.
- \*Clarkson, L. T.
- \*Marston, Mr.

## WOODBRIDGE—

- \*Burrows, D.

## VISITORS.

Bagenal, P. H., Local Government  
Board Inspector.  
Browne, Mrs.  
Buxton, Lady, Shadwell Court, Thet-  
ford.

Buxton, Mrs.  
Johnston, P. H., Carlisle.  
Lucas, Mrs R. G., The Close, Norwich.  
Place, Miss E., Cathedral Close, Nor-  
wich.

The following Unions were not represented :—

ESSEX.—Billericay, Braintree, Chelmsford, Dunmow, Epping, Halsted, Maldon, Ongar, Orsett, Rochford, Romford, Saffron Walden, Tending, West Ham.

NORFOLK.—Depwade, Docking, Downham, Forehoe, Henstead, King's Lynn, Loddon and Clavering, Smallburgh, Swaffham, Thetford, Walsingham, Wayland, Great Yarmouth.

SUFFOLK.—Blything, Bury, Cosford, Hoxne, Mildenhall, Plomesgate, Ris-  
bridge, Samford, Stow, Sudbury, Thingoe.

## SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

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1. THE CAUSES OF PAUPERISM, BY MRS SHAEN, *Guardian of the Kensington Union* - - - - - 414
2. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN BOARDS OF GUARDIANS AND PRIVATE AGENCIES IN DEALING WITH THE UNEMPLOYED, BY MR NOEL BUXTON, *Guardian of the Whitechapel Union* 437

## THURSDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER.

The CHAIRMAN read the following letter which he had received from Mr Lee Warner:—"The Paddocks, Swaffham, 23rd November 1898,—SIR, I am very sorry to be prevented by our Grammar School meeting from attending your discussion. Such discussions are of great use to us all. Our difficulties with vagrants have been enormously reduced by keeping them regularly for two nights. The reduction for the ten months is from 1,301 to 309. As regards relief,

a constant revision of the list of permanent paupers has obviously great educational effect on the Guardians. If persisted in, it gives them hints as to the causes of pauperisation, and at the same time forces on our notice such a fact as the proportion of very old people under our care. Here in Swaffham it is very much above the average. And probably that is the case in most of our rural Norfolk. These are not very original remarks: there is not much original to be said. What we want is constant attention to principles, and that happily is given by our Poor Law Inspector.—Yours faithfully, H. LEE WARNER."

The CHAIRMAN went on to say that he could scarcely help reminding the Conference that on the last occasion when they met in Norwich it was under the presidency of his reverend predecessor in the Norwich Board, Canon Copeman. They in Norwich had very severely felt his loss; and he doubted whether throughout the length and breadth of England there was any chairman of a Board who had such a remarkable knowledge of the Poor Law.

Mr T. BROOKS (Norwich) asked which was the governing body responsible for the arrangements for the Conference. It was very desirable that these Conferences should be useful, and that they should bring together as many of the representatives of Boards of Guardians as possible. He did not think that the efforts made in that direction had been altogether sufficient.

Mr A. F. VULLIAMY (Honorary Secretary to the Conference) said the arrangements were made by a body consisting of one member from every Union in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, who took the trouble to appoint one and send him to the meeting when summoned. He did not know that the Conference could be on a wider basis. He doubted if it could be on a more satisfactory one. That Committee was summoned always in the spring to make arrangements. (A Voice, "And very poorly attended.")

Rev. T. H. TACON (Erpingham)—I never heard of it.

Mr VULLIAMY said it was not every delegate sent to this Conference that was summoned. Each Union had been asked to name some one to be a delegate on the Executive Committee, and if the Unions had not taken the trouble to appoint one, he was not responsible.

Mr T. BROOKS hoped that the Clerk would forward to the various Boards the rules and regulations of the Committee, that they might adopt them if they thought fit. They in Norwich, including the Clerk to the Board, knew nothing of them. Norwich, as the Inspector described it, was the capital of East Anglia, and if any Union knew about the Conference, Norwich ought to do so.

Mr VULLIAMY said the Clerk to the Norwich Board had only been in that capacity for a few months, and therefore he could not know anything about a notice sent as far back as last spring. The Conference decided some two or three years ago that there should be an Executive Committee, consisting of one delegate from every Union. He wrote to every Union asking for the appointment of such a delegate.

All delegates were summoned to meet to make arrangements for the Conference.

Mr P. H. BAGENAL (Local Government Board Inspector) said he had received complaints from two or three Boards of Guardians that they had received no information about this Conference, and that it was not advertised. He personally was most anxious that these Conferences should obtain wider publicity and a better attendance. He did not think the present was a sufficient attendance for three great counties. The Committee which would have charge of this matter next spring ought to meet, if necessary, in Norwich, to make arrangements, which would ensure publicity for the forthcoming gathering, and so enable Guardians to consult together as far as possible on local matters, and especially on those phases of pauperism presented by the eastern counties. He himself knew nothing about the arrangements for the Conference. He did not even know the names of the Committee, although, as Inspector, he took the deepest interest in the whole thing. With all respect he suggested that steps should be taken next spring to put the Conference on a better footing. (Hear, hear.)

Mr VULLIAMY said he sent a notice out a month ago to every Union. It must be borne in mind that there was great difficulty in getting readers for papers. The Conferences did not manage themselves. Very often one was driven up by refusals to take the chair, and to read papers, and sometimes it was even necessary to alter the subjects. These difficulties were overcome as well as they could be; but Conferences must not be so exacting, members while unwilling to do anything themselves, must not expect too much from other people.

Mrs SHAEN then read the following paper :—

## THE CAUSES OF PAUPERISM.

BY MRS SHAEN,

*Late Poor Law Guardian, Kensington Poor Law Board.*

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THE title of our discussion this morning is an appropriate one. The causes of pauperism being plural, they are not to be dealt with under a single head, expressing, as they do, phases of human opinion and practice, differing according to the spirit of the age that impressed its influence upon its environment.

Public opinion, like a pendulum, swings in one direction and another, and settles ultimately into com-



parative repose, when it becomes possible to adjust the balance, and correct its deviations in the light of a later day.

The condition characterised as pauperism, has been described as a deposit of those men and women who, from mental, moral, or physical reasons, are incapable of better work, and whose competition in the labour market, drags down the classes immediately above it.

This description, however, does not take us far, in tracking the spirit of pauperism to its source. It does not attempt to reach back to its remote beginnings in that feebleness of will, that lack of independence and self-help, that tendency to lean on others, that readiness to receive, that dislike to labour and resistance to its requirements, which have resulted in the creation of a vast invertebrate class among our people, living as a parasitic growth upon the industry and thrift of the Commonwealth.

Pauperism is now accepted as a recognised fact, to be provided for and legislated for, as if it were a necessary element of national life; as if pauperdom were a natural portion of the body politic, instead of being a growth of disease and premature decay.

Statesmanship in past ages has been perplexed and baffled in attempts to solve the problem, the solution of which, vexes and torments us still. Methods for the regulation and control of pauperism, have been many and various, shifting from the indiscriminate almsgiving of mediæval days, to the arbitrary repressive Acts of the Tudor era. We are now dealing with pauperism in the direction too much of a palliative philanthropy—to some extent from a reactionary spirit, born of the broader humanity of our age—but a philanthropy which is endangered by the unintelligent practice with which this spirit is accompanied. The instances daily seen of unthinking benevolence, are apt to produce despair among those who desire to uplift the poor. Efforts to raise them are defeated by kindly

but inconsiderate doles, from those whose impulse is to relieve mendicity on the spur of the moment. Showers of pennies for the unemployed, or sixpences to the wily beggar who haunts quiet streets, indicate a sturdy disregard of the result, that gifts like these, far from assisting him, knock a man down who is down already.

At least four, if not five, influences are conspicuous in the past as causes of pauperism. I would classify them thus—putting first the spirit of mendicancy acting as a religious principle; the spirit of indiscriminate almsgiving; the endowment in perpetuity of charitable doles, including the giving of outdoor relief; the encouragement given by the licensing laws to the wasteful expenditure of the people on the indulgence of their drinking habits; and lastly, I venture to add the defects of the present Poor Law, as it stands unmodified at the present day.

Foremost and earliest as a cause of pauperism, I think we must assign the first place to the spirit of mendicancy, to which an exalted and consecrated position was accorded in the childhood of the world, as a protest against the allurements of riches, and from a passionate desire to be set free from contact with its snares. This spirit prevailed in Oriental Buddhism in very early times, as well as in the Western Christianity of later centuries, which adopted the principle of self-abnegation as a reaction against the luxury and the license of Roman society. In a corrupt and licentious age, when the idea of religion was known only by external ceremonies, performed in gorgeous temples, with incense-burnings and its stately paraphernalia of flamens and pontiffs, the self-denying life of the new faith, with its ritual of almsgiving to the poor, personal tendance on the sick, and its community of property with the necessitous, offered a contrast that attracted the best and loftiest minds to its reception.

The examples of men like Francis of Assisi and his first followers, down to Father Damien of our own

day, shine like distant planets sailing through the blue, illumining a world which was darker with crime and ignorance, at the time when the Founder of the Franciscan Order declared himself the Bridegroom of Poverty, than it is even now. Scientific habits of investigation have taught us a more practical and better way of fighting the evils of pauperism than by sharing it. In mediæval Europe, when succeeding generations had receded from the spirit of St Francis, and ceased to put his precepts in practice, the attraction of self-pauperisation continued to spread, like the fascination of the Crusades, and multitudes enlisted under the banner of the Franciscan Order, who were not imbued with the principles of its founder, and who soon repudiated his ideal of taking Poverty as their Bride, or of vowing themselves the Servants of the Poor.

Notwithstanding the impulse given to the care of the poor, by the heroic devotedness of Francis of Assisi, its influence had no permanent stability, and ceased to be for good. His vow of poverty for his Brotherhood was promptly set aside by the Pope of that day, and the Franciscan establishments vied with those of other wealthy landowners in the richness of their possessions and the stateliness of their establishments, as well as in their luxurious standard of living.

The second cause of pauperism I have named grows out of the first by natural evolution. The exaltation of poverty and its corollary mendicancy, amounted to a passion in those great hearts which came in contact with the poverty of the poor ; wise consideration, however, was conspicuously absent from the distribution of their bounty. As might be expected, the flow of indiscriminate alms became a fruitful cause of the pauperisation of the poor, and a lasting heritage of evil. The pauper spirit was in existence and began to develop. In later times the increasing evils of a wealthy ecclesiasticism culminated in waste and riotous living of a very different type from that which characterised the early charities



of pious founders ; and when the crash came that dissolved the monasteries, the State was compelled to intervene with laws for the protection of Society, and the repression of classes hitherto under the exclusive care of the Church. Henceforward the relief of the poor and the control of its administration, passed into the hands of the State, and entered into the sphere of the Politics of Poverty.

The story of the Acts and Statutes dealing with the new burden undertaken by successive Governments need not be narrated here. Some of them included drastic measures, even punishment by death of "valiant beggars and sturdy vagabonds." This treatment would not seem inhuman to the legislators of an age that had not long emerged from a period when capital punishment was the legal privilege of manorial lords, who not only exercised it, but placed the culprit's head on the entrance gates of their domains. A strange survival of this grim custom is said to remain in the form of the quaint stone balls on the gate pillars of old English manor houses, witnessing to the ancient powers of lords of the manor.

A prolonged struggle probably went on between the new views and the old, concerning the treatment of pauperism. The statutes formulated by the Tudor sovereigns were unlikely to commend themselves to the majority of the nation. Begging for alms could not logically be treated as a crime, while ecclesiastical establishments existed, which looked upon mendicancy with indulgence, and regarded almsgiving as acceptable to God. Public opinion must have been difficult to move while ecclesiastical charities were in favour of almsgiving, and it is easy to understand that prohibition of private almsgiving proved impossible to enforce.

Among the provisions of an Act of Henry VIII. for relieving the old and infirm, private alms to beggars were strictly forbidden, on pain of forfeiting ten times the amount given. The preamble of an Act of Edward

VI. is very instructive, indicating a state of things not wholly unfamiliar to us at the present day. The Act goes on to remark, "Partly by foolish pity and mercy of them which should have seen the said goodly laws executed, partly by the perverse nature and long-accustomed idleness of the persons given to loitering, the said goodly statutes hitherto have had small effect; and idle and vagabond persons, being unprofitable members, or rather enemies, to the Commonwealth, have been suffered to remain and increase, and yet do so."

The penalty in those days was a strong one. Any person harbouring, giving money, lodging, or other relief to any rogue, vagabond, or sturdy beggar, "branded or not," is declared liable to a penalty of 20s.

I now approach that which I have described as a third cause of pauperism: the existence of agencies for charitable purposes, endowed in perpetuity. I must quote here some figures taken from the Returns of the Local Government Board for the year 1894, because they bear in a remarkable manner upon our subjects.

There are, scattered about England, and notoriously around Cathedral establishments, large endowed Charities, either restricted to specific purposes, or applicable in gifts in kind or doles of money to other eleemosynary uses. These gifts have obviously a tendency to create pauperism, yet nothing was further from the donor's intention than to produce this result. The expectation in his mind must have been that his gifts should save from pauperism, and that the localities benefited by him should be emancipated henceforth from that chronic destitution which appears to cling to places thus favoured even to this day.

We find in these Returns, that areas endowed with the largest amount of Charities bequeathed from the rich foundations of the past, possess also the greatest number of paupers; while other areas of the poorest and least endowed districts of London, contain the

fewest; the Poor Law relief given in these poorly endowed parishes being considerably below the relief granted in some richly endowed cathedral centres in the provinces. I may take the case of this stately East Anglian metropolis in which we meet, a capital city, memorable from all time as a nursery of lofty causes, and famous for commercial adventure.

Norwich, with a population of 9,000 persons over sixty years of age, has a proportion of paupers above that age of 14 per cent. The outdoor relief given by Norwich in 1894 to 82 per cent. of her paupers appears to show, that one out of every seven persons over sixty years of age in Norwich, is a pauper, although Norwich possesses endowed Charities amounting to over £40,000 a year, or totalled with outdoor relief, to nearly £50,000 a year.

Take the case of *Worcester*, *Salisbury*, *Lichfield*, and *Bristol*, seats of Cathedral establishments, with large charitable endowments; in each case outdoor relief is largely given, and the proportion per cent. of paupers over sixty to the population of the same age, is as follows:—*Worcester* has one in nine, notwithstanding outdoor relief and endowed charities amounting to over £11,000 a year; *Salisbury* one in seven, distributing endowed charities and outdoor relief to the amount of £9,000 a year; *Lichfield*, one in seven, with endowed charities amounting to over £3,000 a year, and giving outdoor relief to 87 per cent. of its pauper population.

In contrast to these instances we find *Atcham* with about the same endowments as *Lichfield*, gives outdoor relief to only 16 per cent. of its pauper population, and only *one* person in *thirty-three* is a pauper. I may add, on the authority of an Atcham Guardian, that when the boundaries of that Union were enlarged, a large portion of Shrewsbury was included. This addition contained 1,200 outdoor paupers. How did the Atcham Board deal with them? The Guardians

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offered them "the House," and *not one* accepted the offer. We also find that the absence of endowments appears to encourage self-help. In St George's in the East, the poorest parish in London, with endowed charities of only £590 a year, outdoor relief is given to only 16 per cent. of its paupers. This seems to prove by the evidence of facts, that the tendency of endowments is to create a demand for relief. It accounts for the disproportionate amount of pauperism that lingers around ecclesiastical centres like those I have instanced, and it explains its perpetuation there; it justifies old Fuller's remark, "that places where great abbeys were seated, swarmed most with poor people, as if beggary were entailed on them."

The endowments from the past, left by men living under entirely different conditions from ourselves, and divided from us by many centuries, can no longer be administered according to a routine fixed by them, especially as it cannot be said that the results have been realised of removing pauperism. There is an endowment, I think, still existing to provide fuel for the burning of heretics, now applied by the irony of circumstance to provide wood and coals to warm those who would in those days have been qualified to be burned as heretics. The pious intentions of past benefactors are now frustrated in a less beneficent manner, and the legacies they left behind, instead of raising the recipients to independence, have been in effect contributory to the pauper spirit that keeps them down.

I class continuous outdoor relief in the same category in its effect on pauperism as the charitable endowments we have been considering. There is a warning that should be stringently laid to heart by the administrators of the taxes of the people—a warning which was, I think, placed as a motto by the late Mr Bland Garland upon a paper upon "Outdoor Relief," read by him at the Central Poor Law Conference in

1882: "Those who are placed in a position of trust cannot be too careful to restrain the natural tendency of human nature, to be liberal at the expense of others."

I quote the words of Lord Althorp on introducing the Poor Law Amendment Act in the House of Commons in 1834, referring to the fact that the Poor Law of the day by permitting relief to be given to the poor in their own dwellings, was the cause of all the existing evils, and "consequences had gone from bad to worse, until all sense of independence had been nearly extinguished, and instead of placing the poor in a state of comfort, the labouring population in many districts had been reduced to a state of misery and distress."

Lord Brougham's words were even stronger in the House of Lords, speaking of "the tremendous evils, the extent and consequences of which no fancy could picture—evils which bad laws worse executed had entailed on the country, which left nothing of the respect which the character of the English peasant in olden times commanded, and which had brought about a state of things in which industry was stripped of its rights, and idleness, vice, and profligacy usurped its lawful place." Lord Brougham also pointed out the evils that "had resulted, and must ever result from applying the forced contributions to the Poor Law fund, as if they were the spontaneous fruits of individual charity, and were levied for the purpose of providing comfort for the many, instead of relieving the destitute few."

These strictures upon the evils of the old Poor Law are in some degree applicable to those which have gathered round and overgrown the new and improved Act that superseded it. It has been remarked that those who passed the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 thought they had ensured the extinction of that great evil, outdoor relief, and if they were alive now they would be much disappointed to

find that after an interval of half a century we have still 58 outdoor paupers in every 78 persons in receipt of Poor Law relief; and this not because the Poor Laws are insufficient but "because the administration of those laws is very little better than it was prior to 1834; because Guardians fail to see, or persistently ignore the fact, that hardly any evil is so great, so degrading, as pauperism, and that the great mass of pauperism is simply *the outcome of outdoor relief*."

The Bradfield Union, of which Mr Bland Garland, whose words I quote, was chairman, has proved by demonstration that nearly the whole of the present outdoor pauperism can be got rid of without difficulty, without hardship to the poor, and with the greatest advantage to the community, and without any material increase of indoor pauperism.

In the Report for the year 1898 it is shown that in the year 1871 the outdoor paupers of Bradfield Union amounted to 999, or *one in every thirteen* of the population, while the indoor paupers numbered 259.

In the present year the outdoor paupers amount to 14, and the indoor to 120, being *one only in 134* of the population. The Report states that the Board became convinced that so long as the people could look forward to obtaining permanent outdoor relief they would be indifferent to making provision for their old age, and their children would neglect to assist them.

The reports of this advanced Board of Guardians are very instructive reading, but I am aware that figures are dry material, therefore I pass on to the next cause of pauperism, namely, the encouragement given by the licensing laws to the national drinking customs, by means of the facilities permitted for the gratification of a degrading habit. There is no need of figures to show that judges, doctors, and ministers of religion concur in stating that drinking is the cause of more than half the national crime and disease, and nearly



all its poverty and misery. The amount of strong drink sold in a neighbourhood is the measure of its degradation, and those who are familiar with the number of public-houses permitted in our slums and streets, occupied by the poorest of our people, are apt to wonder with a feeling akin to despair, why the Legislature's attention has not yet been directed to it by witnessing the results of these drinking customs in brutalising our men, in degrading our women, and in the increasing deterioration of our child population.

The impartial evidence of Government Returns shows us that the whole rental of the nation amounted in a given year to 70 millions, but that the expenditure upon intoxicants amounted to 150 millions. It seems ironical to set down 70 millions for the people's homes, and 150 millions for the people's drink.

This must be reckoned as a cause of pauperism, and explains why the nation is called upon to maintain workhouses, prisons, hospitals and asylums, at a cost, it is alleged, of a hundred millions annually.

Some interesting reading is given in a collection known as the "City Remembrancia," containing records of various municipal matters carried on by correspondence with the Ministers of the Crown. At the risk of recapitulating what is known already, I cannot refrain from quoting from these archives, evidence bearing directly on the subject before us, indicating as it does some of our present difficulties as they were foreseen by the Government nearly three hundred years ago. Their evidence shows the control exercised by the State for the restraint of "overmuch beer-making," and points to the punishment of transgressors by pillory and imprisonment. The correspondence of the Lord Mayor of London in 1613 is especially noticeable. He writes to the Government that "for avoiding of abuses in tippling-houses to the maintenance of drunkenness and vice, and on account of the excessive quantities of barley daily converted into malt for the

brewing of sweet and strong beer, he had, with the advice of his brethren, limited brewers to the brewing of two sorts of beer only—one at four shillings, the other at eight shillings the barrel.”

The Lord Mayor adds that by reducing the number of ale-houses, and limiting their number of barrels from two or three hundred in stock, to only twenty, he had in a fortnight reduced the destruction of wheat and barley, and had saved above 2,000 quarters weekly. But he complains that brewers continue to consume excessive quantities of wheat and barley in brewing stronger beer than allowed by law, they alleging it to be made for use at sea, but in reality conveying it by night to the tippling-houses, and he begs the Lords of the Council to restrain the export of beer above the lawful prices. The Lords in reply point out, “that there were divers good and wholesome laws enacted for restraining the excesses of victuallers and brewers, and against the brewing and selling of beer and ale of unreasonable strength and price, which enactments had been so much neglected, that the greatest part of the tillage of the kingdom, usually employed for wheat and bread corn, had been converted to the sowing of barley, which would produce dearth and scarcity. The Council intended to prevent this great abuse, and to begin with London, where these abuses were most practised, they required every alderman in his ward to call before him inn-holders, victuallers, alehouse-keepers, and all who brewed or sold again, and to examine the *quantity* and the prices of such ale and beer as they had received since the previous Christmas ; to ascertain the names of their brewers, and to report, in writing, to the Council.” The Lord Mayor’s attempts to regulate the rising danger, which had not then reached the *status* of a trade monopoly, appear to have met with little success. The Lords a few years later are informed “that the City had become so pestered with taverns that the better sort of houses were taken up by vintners

at unreasonable rents and converted into taverns, to the maintenance of riot and disorder, and the great inconvenience and disquiet of the neighbours. They add that they understood that by ancient Acts and laws, made for the good government of the City, the number of taverns had been limited to forty, and their places assigned; but it was said there were now upwards of 400. The Lords therefore desired that some speedy remedy might be applied by Act of Common Council for the restraint of this enormous liberty of setting up taverns."

In contrast to the vigorous action of the Chief Magistrate of 1613, let us notice how far the present century has retrograded on this subject. According to reports of the London School Board, it has become a pitiful necessity on the part of school managers to plead for mercy to modern magistrates on behalf of children attending elementary schools; calling attention to the fact that the work, which at great cost was being done in the schools, to promote the mental and moral training of the children, was being undone to a very large extent by their being familiarised with the sights and sounds which were invariably associated with public-houses. Instead of a Lord Mayor stepping in with his drastic measures of restraint, we find a modest appeal, recommending "that a communication should be made to all the Licensing Magistrates within the jurisdiction of the London School Board, expressing the Board's strong condemnation of the sale of intoxicating liquors to children of elementary school age." This resolution of the General Purposes Committee was passed, but not without opposition. One is almost tempted to wish for an autocratic monarch without any Prime Minister, to carry out "the divers good and wholesome laws" enacted for restraining the open sale of intoxicants, of which the Lord Mayor is reminded when he complains to the Government of his day. These laws seem to have



been allowed to fall into abeyance, and as a significant consequence, we have now *fourteen thousand* public-houses in the Metropolitan Police District alone.

These taverns are set up for the alleged convenience of the people. The moral effects that were found to attend them were not overlooked by the legislation of the Tudors, which interposed sharply in commercial ventures, whenever these were proved to interfere with the nation's moral well-being. No timidity was shown, no evasion practised, and no indulgence granted to those culprits whose private interests made "unlawful gains for the oppression of the poor, by overmuch beer-making." The judicial attitude of that day is in marked contrast to that of ours, when society, the press, and a strong monopoly stand up as an invincible phalanx against attempts to check the excessive sale of intoxicants, and to banish tippling-houses from places where their presence is not desired; attempts usually discouraged and defeated.

An appeal was made to me, as probably it has been made to other Guardians of the Poor, by an inmate of my own Workhouse, who entered the House drunk, but who had been induced to sign the pledge during her enforced abstinence. "What shall I do, ma'am, when I go out of the Workhouse? There are nineteen public-houses between the gates and the parish church." The spell had been broken for the time, but the facilities to be found outside for obtaining liquor continue to beset the lives of our people wherever they go, and these facilities are the greatest clog in the pathway of progress. I think it is common-sense, and not strained rhetoric, to conclude that the liquor traffic must be included among the causes of pauperism—an inference lately drawn by the Grand Jury at the Old Bailey. They state it thus:—

"The Grand Jury deem it their duty to express their opinion that more strenuous efforts should be made to regulate the trade in drink, a large number of

cases which have come before us—some of which are of the gravest character—being directly due to its fearful influence.” Drink and crime being joint factors in pauperism.

I should like to touch upon a final cause of pauperism to be found in the defects of the present Poor Law. After serving for many years upon its Boards, its administrators are in a position to have garnered a store of facts not to be gained in the daily experience of ordinary life. This knowledge is, however, qualified by grave doubts as to the perfection, or even the possible improvement, of the Poor Law as it stands.

It is not enough, I think, that our only object in conferring together here should be the improvement of administration, or the effort to bring it into accordance with sound principles of economy as well as the interests of common humanity. We are, as Bacon tells us, “beings of large estate, looking before and after,” and we cannot but see that change must come under the law of evolution that governs the universe. The traditions of 1834 have prevailed long enough to need overhauling, and they should be adjusted to present requirements.

During the course of practical work on Poor Law Boards, we have probably felt desponding moments as the processions of paupers applying for relief passed before us. We have marvelled, perhaps, at the absence of shame or any show of reluctance, to receive food and shelter at the expense of other people, and we have asked ourselves—Is this invertebrate crowd the outcome of our high civilisation? is it a diseased product preying upon itself?

We ponder in our perplexity over the circumstances that have brought these poor people on their beam ends, but the thought arises that there is something behind the adverse circumstances to account for the pauper spirit that habitually demands as a right, that

which is too readily conceded by the mistaken provisions of the law.

A little book entitled "Thrift and Independence" gives a rational explanation of the growth and development of the pauper spirit. The writer says: "A law which teaches men in early life when it is easiest to secure self-provision, that they shall always have a right to be supported by other men, and that starvation shall be impossible for them, must surely weaken the natural incentive to prudence, and deaden the divine instinct of self-preservation, and thus make a vast mass of our people improvident. The right conferred by this law is claimed by those who, under its sanction, have learned to neglect the duty of self-provision. The use of this right is pauperism, and thus a vast mass of our people has become pauperised. The seeming wisdom of keeping themselves qualified for pauper relief by being destitute, tends to teach the young that self-indulgence is an advantage, and self-denial a mistake; that it is better policy to spend money and be helped by the parish in need, than to save money and get nothing from the rates." The Poor Law, in short, compels not merely the rich to pay for the poor, or the fortunate to pay for the unfortunate, but it makes all the thrifty (poor as well as rich) pay for all the wasteful and self-indulgent, in addition to fulfilling that duty of providing for themselves, which the wasteful have chosen to leave unfulfilled.

The human wreckage encountered by Poor Law Guardians in asylums and other institutions under their care, has the effect of creating a despair of ever being able to do anything in the direction of cure or reclamation. There are those who go so far as to hold that no reformation is possible, and that only a clean sweep of the Poor Law at its present stage, and a new beginning made on the lines of a sounder principle, can avail to check the pauper spirit, and to



restore our people to self-help and independent labour. We cannot show that we have discovered the best means of checking the flow of pauperism, or the most satisfactory methods of dealing with its results. The thought recurs with increasing gravity, how far are we meeting the real needs of the impotent poor? The additional buildings rising in ornate and costly style, officered by an army of salaried officials needed for their custody, give no satisfactory answer to the question, "Are we justified in lavishing in this direction an expenditure which marks a high standard of living, upon men and women who have done nothing to provide for themselves, but who have wasted their patrimony in idleness or riotous living?" We are called upon to give food and clothing and medical comforts, and shelter, and it is done ungrudgingly, usually beyond the average measure bestowed on those who with many struggles support themselves. Truly it was said by a witness before the Royal Commission in 1884:—"Poor is the diet of the pauper, poorer is the diet of the small ratepayer, and poorest of all is the diet of the independent labourer." \*

The defects of our English Poor Law do not come within the scope of my paper. They will probably be discussed in detail by many here who are competent to deal with them, though I should like to indicate some of the heads which may be classed as contributory to the pauperism which the Poor Law by its provisions fails to discourage: such as, for instance, the detention of inebriates, the case of the "ins-and-outs," the absolute liberty of free discharge insisted on by the Poor Law, with the result that inmates come in and depart when tired of restraint, entailing an unnecessary amount of booking and re-booking, not only of themselves but also of their children, who must be fetched

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\* Much has been done to raise the diet of the pauper to a very fair standard, but the diet of the other classes has not improved in the same degree.

from Poor Law Schools at a distance, to join their parents in a tramp through the streets by day, and to rest in a low lodging-house at night. I have known a woman to enter and take her discharge sixty-five times in eight months; and a little child who had been in and out of a Poor Law School seventeen times before he was five years old, thus defeating our efforts to save him from pauperism, these cases being assisted in defying the law by its own mistaken provisions. To these points which cry out for reformation, I should like to add the costly artificial school training provided for young pauper life. The environment of barrack schools fails to develop individuality of character or mental and moral growth. These institutions, admirable as they are in their organisation and equipment, fail to draw out the best faculties of the mind, or to qualify these children of the State, to stand alone when the props of their temporary homes are withdrawn.

Our present system of training the children cast upon our care is an artificial one, cut off as it is from the natural influences of family life. It could only be paralleled by imagining a similar arrangement for sending our own sons and daughters into public schools where young life is collected in large numbers for educational purposes, with the understanding that they are never to be allowed to return home, until they are sufficiently equipped to emerge into professional or commercial life. The absence of home training can never be met by even the highest education of the intellect. Among the family ties of a home circle, the affections are developed, the character shaped, and habits of self-reliance formed. The want of these influences is irretrievable in its loss to the child's future. In short our pauper-school system can never be expected to remove what has been called the pauper taint.

It is not within the scope of this paper to suggest

remedies for fundamental defects, but I venture to add that, having regard to effects in their ultimate results on the children of our working population, the school system of the Poor Law must be classed as one among the causes of pauperism.

To sum up, it is manifest that those who gather here to-day, at the cost of some inconvenience and trouble, do so with the desire of calling attention to such evils as can be remedied. "If they are preventible, why are they not prevented?" asks the Prince of Wales.

We assemble here with a sense of the grave responsibilities of citizenship dismayed, but not daunted, by the condition of our great country, in which the rich grow richer, and the poor ever poorer.

"Something wants doing," said the German Chancellor. There must be no more indifference, no more supineness, no more homage to the Indian deity "*Things as they are*," but strenuous exertion on our part to bring in "*Things as they ought to be*."

There was formerly, perhaps is still, a practical test used in Lunatic Asylums, whenever a doubt existed as to a man's imbecility. The patient was set to bale out water from a tank into which the tap was still running. If he failed to turn the tap and stop the flow, his imbecility was clear.

Are there not directions in which we expect to get rid of evils, while we overlook the channels that keep up the supply?

Our educational and religious agencies are brought close to the poorest of our people, but they are defeated by stronger influences appealing to their lower nature in the form of drink and gambling. Their suppression is imperiously called for, as latest and paramount among the causes of pauperism.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Mr GEORGE EDWARDS (Erpingham) said, though he was much obliged to Mrs Shaen for her most excellent paper, which was



very ably written, yet there were many paragraphs in it which, especially from a working-man's standpoint, were open to objection, and ought to be corrected. The reader of the paper had given them what she considered to be the causes of pauperism, and had related evils on which they were all at one. They all admitted that pauperism was a great evil in this country, but in his opinion the cause of that poverty was, to a very large extent, and especially among the rural population, low wages—(hear, hear)—and the constant drifting from the rural villages to the big towns of many of the rural population. He was not saying just now what the cause of low wages was, or what was the reason of their population so constantly shifting, but there was the fact that wages were low and that labourers were constantly moving from the country into the towns. Now he himself was an agricultural labourer, and he could not admit that all those who sought relief at the hands of the Guardians were mendicants, they were not all of the character described in this paper. In the Union which he represented the Guardians had before them men who applied, not gladly, but reluctantly, for relief, honest, Christian men and women, against whose lives and characters not one word could be said. Of course there were exceptions. But the whole cause of their coming before the Board was that they were unable during their working days to make any provision against old age and infirmity. He asked any one present to tell him how a labourer with 12s. or 13s. a week and a large family to maintain could possibly make provision for his old age. Nobly and industriously did they make provision, as was shown by the large friendly societies now in existence, for sickness when it should arrive, but these large societies found that there was no scheme for old age that could be brought within the reach of the average working man. Then as to the question of drink. He was himself almost a life-long total abstainer, and he admitted that there was far too much drink, but he could not admit that drink was the full cause of pauperism in rural villages. Then, so far as the large towns were concerned, if drink was given as a reason of pauperism there, he asked how drink could be prevented when in cities like Norwich many of the working men lived in wretched alleys, where there was no chance of breathing pure air, where the conditions were unsanitary, and where, at every corner of the alley, was a public-house stuck under the nose of the passers in and out, tempting them to go inside with the enchantment of light and a good fire when they knew they had neither in their own homes. Some cities were mentioned by the reader of the paper where pauperism was very high. Salisbury was one of them, and Salisbury would bear out his remarks about low wages. Wiltshire was one of the poorest counties for some reason, he did not know what; it might be from depression in agriculture. Wiltshire was a large agricultural district, he knew it well. There were scarcely any other prosperous industries in the county. When he was there the wages of the agricultural labourer were 9s. a week, with 1s. to pay every week for the

cottage. How was it possible then for pauperism to be anything but high in a county like that. If some scheme could be devised by which working men were to be elevated, it could only be done by giving them better incomes and better surroundings, and by so doing they would be dealing far better with them than by taking such an inhuman device—as he believed it to be—of merely giving them a note for the House. Let Boards of Guardians deal judiciously with every case on its own merits, and let them relieve these poor, honest, hard-working, and in many cases Christian men and women. Let them do the best they could so that the old people might finish their declining days in comfort in their own homes and their own villages, where they had worked for so many years and brought up their families.

Mr J. W. WARREN (St Faith's) said the paper they had just listened to seemed to advocate the suppression of pauperism by giving a note for the House. That might be a very good thing, but that would do nothing so far as suppressing the poor went. If they refused outdoor relief, what effect would it have? Only a portion of the money now collected by the rates was spent on the poor. He would presently say something about paupers other than those who asked relief from the Guardians. Supposing they refused outdoor relief. He would grant it that there would be very few who would take a note for the House. How would they live? They would live on those next and nearest to them, those who were very little better off than they were themselves, their own poor relatives. There was very little money they would get from the charitable, because there were very few charitable people of wealth. Therefore at his Board he stood up at any time when he thought that the case was a reasonable one, and advocated relief. He could not be one who would indiscriminately refuse outdoor relief as some Unions did. They were poor by reason of their environment, were poor on account of their circumstances. The law-makers of England had very often made laws which were not right and proper, especially their land laws. He went to meetings in his Union Workhouse in a parish where there was as much money which went clean away out of the district in the shape of rent as was received by all the labourers there, and as much, in his opinion, as was earned or gained by the farmers. Where it went to he did not know, but the cause of pauperism was the improper social system brought about by the land laws. If they were to take their land laws from the Bible, the system would be very different to what they had now. They could not have such wealthy people taking such large sums of money as rent without having low wages as well. Then they said it was drunkenness that led to pauperism. But was not drunkenness caused by environment and weakness of mind? He himself was a pauper, and took relief from the rates. £900 a year was received in his Union. By the last rating bill the Overseers were to relieve the farmers of half their local rates, and as the grant the Government made was not sufficient



to provide that, out of every £3 he received £1 came out of the pockets of the rest of the poor ratepayers living round about him. Now, because he had become more wealthy, and held more land, he had become a greater pauper. If a system like that was going on, the rates were bound to increase. As Mr Edwards had said, a great many men were leaving the rural districts. It was not the best nor the strongest men who were left behind; the strong and the healthy went away. They had no opportunity whatever of saving for their old age; and it would be very hard if outdoor relief should be refused.

Mr F. J. CROTCH (Norwich) agreed generally with the two last speakers. He complimented the reader of the excellent paper to which they had listened, but he differed from several of the paragraphs in it. She had given five causes of pauperism. He should like to suggest a sixth—millionaires. (Hear, hear, and interruption.) That was an undoubted fact. He agreed with the finish of the paper that the rich were growing richer and the poor were growing poorer. ("No, no.") Could their friend who said "No, no," tell them of a richer country than England, and could he tell them of one where there were poorer people than in England. (A Voice—"Yes.") Then tell us. (A Voice—"New York.") The poverty of the English poor was proved by their Poor Law system, and he said the millionaires were the cause of pauperism in England. Mr Gladstone said ten years ago that the annual wealth of this country was £1,350,000,000, and that wealth was increasing by leaps and bounds. Of that wealth the wage-earning class received only some £500,000,000, and £700,000,000—that was £200,000,000 more—went to the class who did nothing. Was not that an object-lesson for them? There were the two extremes, and the reader of the paper was right when she said the rich grew richer and the poor grew poorer.

Rev. Dr ASHWIN (Lexden) rose to a point of order, but the Chairman said he did not think he could interrupt Mr Crotch.

Mr CROTCH went on to say that they were told more than once last night (by Mr Bagenal) that the old people, when they became past work, instead of going to the Workhouse or receiving outdoor relief, should be dependent on their families—(hear, hear)—that their sons and daughters should maintain them. He would just like to ask them how it was to be done. With all their system of contracts, and of buying large quantities on the most advantageous terms, it cost the Board of Guardians 2s. 6d. per head for food in the Workhouse for a dietary scale which was not luxurious. He would allow that a working man had 15s. in the country and 18s. in the town—though they did not. They would average five children in a family, all of school age. That would be on the dietary scale allowed by the Workhouse 17s. 6d. per week for food alone. Then there would be 3s. 6d. for the cottage, and firing at least another 1s. (Interruption.) He was speaking of the towns; he had been through it all, and he was not afraid nor ashamed to speak about it. Then there were boots



and shoes, and there was clothing. How could they do it? They did it because they were cleverer than the Guardians were—(hear, hear)—but the women themselves could not tell how they managed to contrive it. For his own part, he said, give the poor half-pay when they have done their work, the same as they did to officers in the army and navy. It was said that paupers looked on relief as a right, and they would continue to do so, so long as the upper classes got relief in the manner in which they did. There were as many admirals on retired pay as there were warships.

Mr BERNARD WILSON (Launditch) said, instead of having a sober discussion, they had drifted away from the point altogether. Pauperism had been attributed to heredity, to public-houses, to millionaires, and to the church, but it seemed to him that the causes of pauperism had been left in the background. When he heard that a lady was coming down to them from London to read a paper, he naturally thought her reasons would be more applicable to city life than to country life, and that had been so. Pauperism was more definite in the country than it was in the towns. In towns it might result from a strike, or from some decayed industry, but in the country they knew every person individually, knew the cause of his pauperism, and knew the whole history of his family.

Mr Wilson went on to speak of the rotten state of many of the local benefit clubs. Many had gone under, and a number of those which were left were completely rotten. Men subscribed to them, and then when sickness came could get nothing out of them, and so were disinclined to save in the future. They had heard a gentleman say it was impossible for farm labourers with 10s. or 11s. a week to save money. It was not so. In his own neighbourhood, adjoining him, were three farms occupied by men who were once farm labourers. The farms were from three to four hundred acres in extent. They were men of thrifty habits, of course, and of small families, but there it was, and it was not true to say that the farm labourers could not rise in life. The race of farmers, as he knew them as a boy, was being replaced by men who had risen from the land. There was a want of light employment on farms for men who were past a full day's work. A man would work and get full wages up to a certain age, but then he would say, "I am not going to work any more," and he suddenly dropped away from the full price of labour into earning nothing at all. They had had Mr Bagenal upon them all round on lax administration. Lax administration produced a reproductive crop of paupers. There should be an outdoor relief test, that was to say, when a man who had been at work on a farm came for relief, he should be told, "You must work for three hours a day on some farm. ("No, no.") Some men refused to do the slightest bit of work. He knew an old man, a pauper, who could make good straw bee-skeps. He had made him (Mr Wilson) a good many, but he got afraid that the relieving officer might hear of it, and he made no more. People who had been working all their lives looked upon doing nothing as the greatest luxury—

(laughter)—and if some outdoor relief test could be applied, a large number of those who were living on the luxury of doing nothing would chuck it up. He disagreed with what had been said about millionaires.

Rev. H. S. FULLAGAR (Erpingham) thanked Mrs Shaen for her paper, with which he agreed to a great extent. He thought that drink and gambling had a very great deal to do with pauperism in the country, and they ought to be restrained. Outdoor relief might be given too readily, but he agreed with his friend, Mr Edwards, that great hardship might be inflicted if they adopted severe rules against outdoor relief altogether. He thought there was a grain of truth in the attacks on millionaires, and he thought it would be a disgrace to millionaires and to the country so long as it could be said that there was any man who was sober, honest, industrious, and of good life, and who was a real benefit to the State, who was in such a condition as to find it impossible to lay by and make provision for old age. (Hear, hear.) He thought it ought to be in the power of such a man to be assured that his old age would be provided for. They could not in this country do without rich people, who employed thousands of others.

Rev. Dr ASHWIN (Lexden) spoke of a benevolent society with which he was connected, which provided pensions for its members. Those members were agricultural labourers for the most part, and he greatly admired many whom he knew, who, even when they were bringing up a considerable family who brought in nothing whatever to the maintenance of the household, kept up their club payments.

Mr BUXTON then read the following paper :—

## CO-OPERATION BETWEEN BOARDS OF GUARDIANS AND PRIVATE AGEN- CIES IN DEALING WITH THE UN- EMPLOYED.

By NOEL BUXTON, Esq., M.A.,

*Guardian of the Whitechapel Union.*

THE problem of the unemployed may be more acute in industrial districts than rural ones, more prominent at special seasons than it is now. But it needs no excuse for bringing it forward, so long as our back doors are beset by tramps, our Workhouses provide for "ins-and-outs," and our casual wards are well filled; or even so long as an army of cadgers and casually

employed people exists, not really engaged in any useful employment. The particular method of reform with which we are concerned to-day is the institution called the "Labour Home."

What is a Labour Home? It is a combination of a boarding-house and a place for labour, whether in town or country, where those who are not at present self-supporting may be helped to become so by regaining their health and hopefulness and energy, perhaps by learning useful work, and by being helped to find a situation.

It is a reformatory, and not (as the Workhouse) intended to be a permanent provision for any class; nor is it an experiment in any new system of land tenure.

#### RAISON D'ETRE.

It may be asked, "Why are Labour Homes wanted?" There are two main reasons:—

(1.) That many people who are hopeless, or genuinely workless, may, by such Homes, be assisted to independent life. Of the gain to the world, if this can be done, it is hardly necessary to speak. With distress from unemployment we are all familiar; for its removal we are all anxious; but I may with advantage briefly quote from Sir Walter Besant's recent article in the *Contemporary Review*:—

"The gain to the country of every single case can never be estimated, can never be measured by any standard; it is the gain of one more useful life; it is the gain of an example; it is the gain of children and grandchildren—one knows not how far and wide the gain may reach—brought up in honesty; it is the gain of one more man on the side of order; it is the gain of infinite possibilities in the direction of good rather than evil."

And as to the cost saved, he says:—

"A wastrel of the London streets uses up, one way and another, at least £40 worth of food, drink,



clothes, light, fire, and shelter. He ought to produce, by his own work, at least £60 of something or other—so that every such worthless creature is a loss to the community of £100 a year.”

But the evil itself is no reason for Labour Homes. The reason lies in the fact that by them reclamation *can* be carried out.

The second reason is this, that—

(2.) The existence of such Homes tends to prevent that thoughtless form of charity which increases the class of degraded people ; and

(3.) Their existence aids the suppression of begging by legal means.

These are the main grounds for the establishment of Labour Homes. Before concluding that the Homes are therefore desirable and useful, let us inquire what experience has to teach.

#### SURVEY OF HOMES EXISTING.

I have been asked to give some account of the German Labour Homes, of which I have lately had experience, and it will not be out of place to touch also upon what is being done of the same kind in England.

The German system originated about fifteen years ago with the celebrated Pastor von Bodelschwingh, and was an offshoot of his great institutions for epileptics and others at Bielefeld, in Westphalia. It has grown so rapidly that there are now twenty-eight colonies scattered over the Empire, of which one is in Berlin, one (at Hildesheim) is for women, and the rest are “farm” colonies as far as possible from towns.

I do not wish to spend time over the rival merits of Town and Country Homes ; they are the same in essential features ; some cases suit one, and some the other. The Germans lean to the idea that country life is the most wholesome and reforming, while at the same time the necessity of leaving town forms a test of anxiety to reform, which is valuable, and which no

one will minimise who understands the strong preference for town life entertained by the class we are dealing with. On the other hand, the scattered labourers on a farm are more difficult to control.

The German colonies are part of a system which includes relief stations, registries, lodging-houses, and farm colonies. They are supported by donations from the State and local public bodies, and by private charity. There are, firstly, relief stations in every town and district. These are labour yards, usually for wood-chopping, where any applicant can, by a few hours' work, earn enough to get a night's lodging. Labour registries are attached to them.

Private charity has supplemented these with a great system of lodging-houses, the International Society (as it is called) having over four hundred in the Fatherland, and endeavouring to combine, wherever possible, a relief station and a lodging-house under one manager. For those who, in spite of these aids, cannot find situations, there is the farm colony.

In theory the workless person is bound to have from the police a license, or *Wanderschein*, on which is registered the place he last slept at and the place he must go to. If a situation suitable to his case is vacant, and known at the relief station, he must take it, or be reported to the police; if not, he is directed to the next station, and if found wandering elsewhere, the police shut him up. The only remaining course is to enter a labour colony where he is compelled to work. According to German law, he inevitably, therefore, ends in a situation, a prison, or a colony; but it may fairly be doubted whether the knowledge and supervision of the police is so strict and detailed as to admit of no other alternative. Professor Mavor, in the Board of Trade Blue-Book, estimated in 1893 that 8,000 people passed through the German colonies annually; there are now twenty-eight colonies, con-

taining about 5,000 men, through which probably 15,000 people pass every year.

Besides ordinary farm work, a great deal has been done in the way of reclaiming land and removing soil. In this way one or two of the colonies have so far improved their farms as to find it best to sell out, which they can do at a profit, and move to inferior farms, which they may treat in the same way. Simple digging by a large number together is easily supervised, and the application of this class of labour to such work may prove to be positively profitable, for though the labourers are mostly inferior, the cost of keeping them is small. It is the opinion of experts that with suitable conditions, a Labour Home on land requiring reclamation should be carried on at very small cost, if not at a profit.

The Home is superintended by a manager, who controls the work, and is also "house father," or head of the Home. The men sleep in dormitories, and have large rooms for sitting and dining. We shall go further into details when examining the methods of Labour Homes.

Turning now to Homes in England, the largest system is that of the Salvation Army. Founded after the publication of "Darkest England," the Army social scheme has grown till it includes the large "Farm Colony" at Hadleigh in Essex, and a large number of Town Labour Homes. At Hadleigh the colonists sleep in separate houses, containing forty men each, but there is a great common dining hall and public room. The estate amounts to over 2,000 acres, and besides agriculture, large experiments have been made in poultry, fruit-growing, and brick-making. Many of the most responsible positions are held by men who came to the farm as drunkards and ne'er-dowells, and have shown themselves competent. Others occupy good situations independent of the colony, while many, of course, cannot be traced. As in the



German colonies, men are received at the Salvation Army houses without special inquiry and recommendation.

The Church Army system, though smaller, is probably the best equipped and most efficient in England. There are twenty-four Homes in towns, and a small Farm Labour Home in Essex, for which cases are selected from the Town Homes, or sometimes sent direct. No Home contains more than twenty-five men, and the method followed is that of careful attention to each case, the officials holding that social failures cannot be treated by rule, and can best be raised by personal influence.

Another Labour Home is that of the C.U.S.S. at Lingfield, in Surrey. This resembles the Church Army Homes in its main features, but follows in some respects the German model, especially in the introduction of working men volunteers, who offer themselves for very low pay, to live with the colonists day and night, and devote themselves to their service. This colony aims at the closest co-operation with Boards of Guardians.

Another small Home is that of Mr Walter Hazell, M.P., where only select cases are received. It is almost exclusively an emigration test farm.

These are, for our purpose, the chief agencies at work. The details and character of the scheme will be best seen in reviewing its features one by one.

There are also many Labour Homes for women and boys, but we are more especially concerned with those for men.

### METHODS OF LABOUR HOMES.

We have now to bear in mind the objects in view, and to consider how the methods attain them.

We found the *raison d'être* of Labour Homes to be—

I. That social failures can be reclaimed.

II. That pauperising charity can be limited.

III. That by their aid begging can be further suppressed.

I. Few will deny that the first includes the reclamation of those who are not yet failures. Many fairly good men descend the ladder through ill-luck or slight faults who might be saved from reaching the bottom by timely help, but cannot be so aided by the Poor Law, and are not so aided by existing charity. If colonies can arrest the downward course they must be credited with a splendid economy, both material and moral.

We may summarise the methods intended to meet the object of reclamation as follows :—

- (a.) Tempting the discouraged to try again.
- (b.) Giving them health, hope, character, and skill.
- (c.) Helping them into situations.

(a.) Tempting the discouraged to try again.

This brings us to the question of whom to admit.

The first thing is to get suitable persons to enter the Home willingly.

We cannot compel them ; we must tempt them. Thus a Labour Home must be tolerably attractive to those who are in earnest about improving their position. The more odious it is to the idler and cadger, so much the better. The board and lodging must be good, and the chance of restoration considerable. One at least of the German Homes advertises that any one staying five months will have the offer of a good situation. But the work must be hard and discipline strict.

This matter of admission involves the whole question of what classes can be, or ought to be, got into Labour Homes. Remembering that the class we wish to get are the failures who may be set on their feet again, or those who are hardly yet failures and may be saved from becoming so, let us now observe what experience has to teach.

The German colonies were at first used by genuine workmen who stood a fair chance of regaining work at a trade which they knew. But in a few years the cadging class and ex-prisoners became so numerous in the colonies that good men found it a loss of reputation to enter them, and a lowering of social position. The colonies being thus left mainly to the complete failures of society, after nine years of existence (in 1891) the percentage of ex-convicts proved to be 75. It is now over 80, and in some cases 90 per cent., showing that provision is made practically for this class only.

In the German women's colony at Hildesheim, the proportion of ex-convicts is smaller, though very large, and is increased by the fact that many are sent by the police, sometimes at the request of friends, and though it is possible to leave the place without danger of forcible detention, those who leave without permission are often found by the police and sent back. It is claimed that the German police system of espionage is of great public benefit in this way. Whether it is so or not, we in England have only to consider what method is suitable to people with absolute freedom. Penal powers for private institutions are not to be thought of.

The Salvation Army farm colony finds that about 25 per cent. of its inmates have been in prison. As in Germany, the men are not, and have not been good workmen, unless men who are good in all points except indulgence in drink can be called so.

The main feature of entry into the German and Salvation Army Homes is that admission to them is free to all; practically no selection is exercised, no limit put upon the number of times one man may enter, and no minimum of time enforced during which he is obliged to stay, on pain of rejection for the future.

The Church Army and Lingfield Societies, and Mr Hazell, on the other hand, remembering how few can really be reclaimed, confine themselves to more or less



hopeful cases. They take no one over forty-five years of age; they insist that he shall stay a certain number of months; they refuse all who are not recommended by Guardians or other reliable people, or who do not appear to be capable of reformation. The Lingfield Colony entirely excludes ex-prisoners. The result of these rules is that a larger proportion get situations, and that those are excluded on whom money and trouble would be certainly wasted, or who have carelessly thrown up the chance of regular work.

At these colonies admission is granted in many cases to those who apply at the Homes or offices, provided the case seems hopeful. But many are admitted on the recommendation of Guardians, private persons, the Charity Organisation Society, and other societies. All are passed through the central offices, and then sent to the most suitable Home, it may be in town or may be on the farm. The Rev. J. S. Brooks, of Lingfield Home, tells me—"Three have been sent by the Charity Organisation Society. Of these, one went to Canada, one to a situation, and one was dismissed. All the others have been sent by personal friends or philanthropic people. All must have five shillings per week paid with them until we can see they are able to earn their living. Farming is not easily learnt, so while some are not paid for more than two or three weeks, some are many months needing it, and some will never earn their living at farming."

#### CLASS OF APPLICANTS.

It has always been found that *good workmen* do not enter, and many of the inmates are *drink cases*, some of whom can never be successful as independent men. Speaking generally, none of these labour colonies have induced good workmen in temporary difficulty to use them.

A notable fact is that great numbers of applicants are social failures from the middle class. It does not

appear that those who have regularly gone on tramp, or who are born members of the tramp class, form a large proportion of those who enter. A very large number have seen far better times, and have fallen from good positions through drink, gambling, or other follies. These are the social failures who show the futility of hoping that poverty and misery can ever be reduced below a terribly large minimum ; they are, moreover, the very cases which most need help. The good workman had far better remain independent. Among the colonists there were represented when I visited them, stockbrokers, clergymen, gun-makers, drapers, solicitors, and clerks, and a day which I spent at one of the farm colonies was enlivened by discussions with colonists on theosophy and Watts' pictures. Of the various specified classes which entered the Church Army Homes in 1892, the largest was that of clerks.

In addition to these, there are of course men who have been labourers, and to whom the work, which is chiefly manual, is less irksome, and restoration to employment easier.

The case of *married men* must come under this heading of admission. Mr Kelly, in his "Evolution and Effort," makes out a case for compulsory colonies to contain men, women, and children. But with no penal powers, the reception of whole families seems to be beyond the scope of Labour Homes. Yet the rescue of a family and home from break up may be even more important than the case of the single man.

Almost all the men who enter declare themselves to be single, but every one present will recall cases where, by the restoration of a father to work and will, the whole family may be saved from pauperism. These cases must be provided for.

Private people or societies may sometimes support the family *pro tem.*, or the colony may allow the father to send his wife money, if he can earn more than his

board and lodging; or, in carefully selected cases, where it would clearly be prevention of destitution, Guardians may with advantage relieve the family, though probably they must do so in the Workhouse. The Church Army report: "We have never, to my knowledge, taken a man into one of our Homes while his wife was receiving outdoor relief from the Guardians, but have had several men whose families have remained in the Union during the husband's stay with us, and many of these cases have turned out satisfactorily. All money the inmates of the Homes earn over the six shillings a week for board and lodging can be sent to the wives, and in some cases, by special arrangements with the Guardians, we have taken the man from their Union, leaving the wife and children in the 'House,' on condition that we let the Guardians know at once should the husband leave the Home. In other cases we have arranged for the wife to enter one of our Women's Homes and for the man to go to a Men's Home."

In these ways the chance of restoration can be offered to married men and women as well as to the unmarried.

#### DANGER OF FREE ADMISSION.

Considering now the whole question of admission, experience favours the system of taking only selected cases, and applying to them strict rules.

The Poor Law principle, that the condition of the pauper must not be better than that of the poorest independent worker, is one which even private Labour Homes must obey. It is essential that the attractions shall not be such as will lead any person to prefer them to really independent life, or make it easy for him to throw up a situation with impunity. The test of work and discipline will deter most idlers from applying, but the work test is not enough. It must not be forgotten that many who are strong, more or less willing, or even really good workmen, find it very hard to be regular, and cannot resist drink or temper,



even when it means loss of employment. There is a great number whom nothing deters from losing work but the fear of absolute destitution. There is hard Work to be done in the Workhouse and casual ward, but there are many whom it does not deter from losing a regular situation. If, therefore, the Labour Home forms a comfortable provision, ready for the day when work has been foolishly lost, it may prove a grave danger. While, therefore, the Home must be made attractive to those whom it can benefit, it must not be open to those who have shown themselves by carelessness unable to make good use of it.

That this danger is not an imaginary one is perhaps shown by the experience of the colonies which are open to all, viz., those of Germany and the Salvation Army. These find large numbers of inmates returning again and again. Their numbers are small in summer, but uncomfortably large in winter, just when there is little work to give upon the farm. These colonies are evidently used by a class who will not be restored, but who lead a cadging life in summer and are hard up in winter. I find in the Blue-Book previously quoted the following :—"The repeated admissions into the German colonies show that the colonies are dealing with a body of at least 4,000 men (the number is now much larger) who are for various reasons unable to regulate their own lives on an independent basis, or unable to get or keep employment under customary conditions." This is not the class intended to use the Home; its work is remedial above all things, and our own preference must be given to the system of receiving only cases selected for their fitness and hopefulness. Without this safeguard of careful selection we may be actually increasing the number of degraded people.

#### TREATMENT.

(b.) Coming now to the matter of *restoring hope and*

*character, health and skill*, the methods employed must be considered. But it must be frankly admitted that the completest methods go for nothing, unless confirmed by results, in the shape of hopeless men restored to self-support. In short, the tree must be tried by its fruits. *Prima facie* probability must be discounted, and the methods need be but briefly reviewed.

The treatment prescribed consists mainly of one sovereign medicine—healthy *work*. When the paying inmates of Von Bodelschwingh's Inebriates' Home complained that as they paid £100 per year, they ought not to be made to work eight hours a day—"Work," he said, "is the privilege for which you pay." That is the principle on which Labour Homes proceed. Regular and healthy toil is the tonic from want of which most of the patients are suffering. Eight or nine hours a day are usually worked at Labour Homes. At the Home where I have passed a night and day, the time-table was as follows:—

Prayers, 6.20 A.M. ; breakfast, 6.30 ; work, 7 to 12 ; dinner, 12 to 1 P.M. ; work, 1 to 5 ; tea, 5.30 ; prayers, 9 ; supper, 9.15 ; bed, 9.45 ; making a clear nine hours' work, without allowing for meals.

But considering that work is not excessively long even in summer, and that there is meat at two meals every day, there may be danger of treating these semi-paupers better than the labourers at neighbouring farms and workshops ; but the colonists are semi-invalids, and must be well nursed. Taking into account the restraints and discipline they submit to, their lot is not likely to be envied by independent men. Five hours' work at a stretch is more than many workmen care for, and bread with skim milk in the evening is none too much to keep out the cold on a winter's night, of which fact I had bitter experience at the Lingfield Colony. The kind of work varies from simple wood-chopping to high-class me-

chanics' work in towns ; and from digging to butter-making in the country ; while in both cases, a man is sometimes found best suited with book-keeping in different forms.

It is, of course, difficult to get a full day's work out of the average colonist. Some, frequently the drink cases, are very good men indeed, but it may be taken as a general rule that the strain of work in a Labour Home is not so severe as to make life a burden.

Owing to the difficulty and expense of suiting the needs of each case, it has not been found feasible to teach men a special trade. Moreover, it is probably not desirable. Few of the labouring class colonists have capacity to learn more than simple work, while those who are fallen from a higher class have already a profession. Most of both classes require help and hope and self-control, much more than skill.

And again, there would be some unfairness in giving to the less deserving the special skill which more deserving men have not acquired from want of money to buy it. The most suitable chance of teaching a trade seems to be in the cases where a professional man, even a doctor or clerk, can qualify for emigration by learning the accomplishments of a "handy man."

#### MORAL INFLUENCE.

If work is the chief reforming agency, moral influence is hardly less important. All experience, both of public Workhouses and private institutions, goes to prove this. It is the main advantage of private management, that it can bring moral influence to bear so much better than public management. The impotence of any official system to effect true reformation has been amply proved in the experience of the Poor Law. The ne'er-do-well who arrives in the Home, cursing society in general for its cruelty and



indifference to his misfortune, will most easily be reached by kindness. It is therefore essential that nothing like a cast-iron system shall prevail, and that the authorities of the place shall be considerate. The superintendent of a casual ward can be humane, but he must not go out of his way to be friendly. It is otherwise with a Labour Home. There is not the same necessity to make the place uncomfortable. Nothing will be effected unless the inmates' confidence and good-will can be drawn out. A kindly tone is therefore assiduously cultivated. There are games and books for the evening, and amusement is encouraged. Religion is held up as the motive which prompts the maintenance of the Home, and the actions of its managers. Texts are on the walls; there are meetings, with cheerful music, and frequent services, for which many Homes have a chapel; and meals begin and end with grace. It is hardly possible that the jaded casual, who has fallen from one disappointment to another, and felt the world against him, should not be struck by the warmth and kindliness of the atmosphere he enters.

It must not, however, be supposed that for the sake of kindness discipline is relaxed. Attempts in this direction have been found disastrous. The character of Labour Home masters is perhaps more truly illustrated by one manager of my acquaintance, who sometimes greets a feeble-looking applicant with the question, "Can you fight?" If the applicant replies that he would prefer to call another day, the manager concludes he is too weak a character ever to have been really restored, and congratulates himself on having avoided useless expense.

It will readily be seen that a great impression might be made by surroundings such as I have described, and by the influence of religious revival, and in fact very striking cases of complete reformation have been seen at Hadleigh and in Germany. But one

would naturally expect that individual dealing and, where it is possible, friendship will be more successful still. Accordingly we find greater apparent success where the number of men in the colony is not larger than the manager can personally know. Men of this stamp are of every variety, and require every variety of treatment; we may therefore commend those colonies, such as the Church Army, who never allow the capacity of a colony to exceed twenty-five.

Even with small numbers (and consequently greater expense per man) it is difficult for the manager to become closely acquainted with his men. He has not only to befriend them, but also to make them work. With the best men it is not easy to maintain both intimacy and authority; much less with men of feeble character. How then can personal influence be exercised?

To meet this need the German and Lingfield colonies have a most interesting device. They have attracted volunteer workers, by holding out a field for devoted labour, both secular and religious, in which those who are willing to teach manual work are able also to give moral and spiritual teaching. In Germany there are great numbers of these so-called "Christian brothers," who live with the colonists, work, eat, play, and sleep with them. To some extent they are foremen, but not so far as to be unable to make friends. At Lingfield there have been six of them, living on terms of complete equality in all points except one. In this one point they are not above but below the colonists; it is this—they wait upon them at meals, none of them beginning his dinner till they have served the twenty-four fellow-labourers. By no other sign would a new-comer distinguish between the willing worker and the social failure. In the evening, the brothers, when I saw them at Lingfield, were playing games with the men, as were also the manager and his wife. My opponent at dominoes proved to be a workman, whose native

village I know, who had left a good situation in large carriage works and the duties of an occasional Methodist preacher, to spend his life on a level with the shipwrecked members of his class. It is inspiring to find that there are genuine workmen who even in this sordid age are attracted by the highest possible ideals of the practical Christian life. If the system can be further developed, as it is in Germany, here is a possible solution of the personal influence difficulty.

These two remedies, work and moral influence, are the chief methods employed; but besides labour, food and training, kindness and religion, we may mention also *the sense of living by work* and not by charity. A man is charged so much for his keep; beyond that, he is credited with money. This the Salvation Army pay over weekly, holding it better to let a man learn self-control, and not to tempt him by the chance of spending some months' savings all at once. Other colonies bank it for him, or pay him part weekly. The five shillings or six shillings granted weekly is held back for future use at Lingfield, and the only direct weekly allowance is an ounce of tobacco. But however a man be paid, it is found that the sense of living honestly, by his own labour and not on other people's, is powerful to raise a man at once many steps in the moral scale.

There can be no statistics of spiritual classes, but to the fact that many men are radically reformed and renewed in character and life, those who know anything of the work will bear unqualified testimony.

### SITUATIONS.

(c.) We come now to the fruit by which the tree should be chiefly known—the tangible facts of restoration in the shape of situations gained and kept.

In Germany the number was at first 27 per cent., falling to 19 in 1891, and lower still since. Much better results appear in the women's colony, and that



for men at Berlin. Some of the colonies do not show records, and the President of the colonies in Saxony replied to my question that the matter is "un grand secret." It is, of course, impossible to follow the course of a number of moving men, and, moreover, it is found unpopular with the colonists, so that inquiry has in some cases been given up.

The Salvation Army also began well. Mr Lewellyn Smith's Blue-Book shows that during the first two years of the farm colony 990 men passed through it. Their stay averaged about four months, and 440, or about 45 per cent., found situations of some kind. A smaller percentage has since been shown, the latest figures available giving 588 cases actually placed out of 2,790, or 21 per cent. in addition to those who left nominally to find work.

Many have been taken on by the Southend Corporation, which perhaps shows that they have a good reputation.

As we should expect with a selective and very carefully managed system, the Church Army restore a large proportion to independence. They have kindly taken out figures, specially of Poor Law cases, for 1897. Of those who came from Workhouses, 158 passed through the Homes and left in health. Sixty-one went to known situations, or 38 per cent.; seventy more left nominally to seek work; twenty-one were idle; two were arrested for felony; and only three returned to the Workhouse.

Of 342 casual ward cases 45 per cent. got situations; 40 per cent. left to seek work, and 15 per cent. were idle or insubordinate.

The Blue-Book analyses the cases for 1892 of all sorts. Of 654 passed through in London, eighty-four found work for themselves, and 283, or 43 per cent., went to places found by the Church Army, or were restored by them to friends. Of situations found the largest class is again that of clerks. It should be

noted that the Church Army prefer to make a man obtain the situation for himself, finding that he then takes more trouble to keep it. This makes the figures look worse than they should, because some of those classed as "left to seek work" would otherwise appear as those who found situations.

Mr Hazell, as the result of two and a half years' work at Langley Training Farm, reports on the 107 cases accepted as follows:—Sixty-seven went to Canada or New Zealand; forty-three are known to be doing well, and seventeen more believed to be so, and seven left for work in England, making 62 per cent. of probable successes.

As to Poor Law cases, at his present farm at Great Hundridge, nine have passed through, and of these four are doing well, and five have failed.

With regard to Lingfield, Mr Brooks gives account of forty-two cases which have passed through the farm. Five have gone to Canada and are doing well. Thirteen have gone to places in England, and have not returned to the colony. Nine have been dismissed, and fifteen left of their own accord, of whom four ran away, and others (as they put it) "thought they could get work if they were back in London."

## II.

We have now dealt with the questions of reclamation, and must consider the other side of the work of Labour Homes, viz., the checking of pauperising charity. Towards this end their influence is twofold.

(a.) In the first place their existence induces those who would otherwise give money without knowing its effect to hold their hands. Who is there, not devoid of humanity, who has not found it well-nigh impossible to refuse a few pence to the hungry-looking man who opens the cab door for him, who claims to be anxious for work, who will be "all right" if he can reach some particular place, or if he can redeem his

clothes from the clutches of "Uncle"? What opening could we point to if we refused the money which might possibly provide the man the means of self-support? The Workhouse is not the place for him; we cannot tell him of a vacant situation; the Labour Bureau can do nothing. Therefore, in case the man's story should be true, we give him a trifle; and these are the trifles to which a whole multitude of the miserable owe their existence. Not only is the money wasted, but we are producing by it a crop of wretchedness. It is here that the Labour Home comes in. If we can point to a place where, without becoming a pauper, any man who tries to work will be given a chance, then we stay our hands. And if we know that the Guardians will give him a chance, we do not feel it essential to give him something to keep him out of the Workhouse. Granting that there are many who would in any case be short-sighted, and that the working class will always, whether from custom, fear, or sense of duty and pity, give to those who beg from them, there are still very many anxious to do the wisest thing. These, when they can refer the man to a Labour Home, will refuse to give him money, and their refusal will be an unqualified gain; for there cannot be one in a thousand of such thoughtless gifts that confer the smallest real benefit, while the general effect is undoubtedly to increase the sum of misery and degradation.

There may be some who would argue that, if the stream of such miscalled charity were stopped, the hardship and degradation of pauper life would be thrust on many who should be saved from them. To such I would recommend a perusal of a small book called "The Beggars of Paris," by a Frenchman (who learnt all their ways by personal experience), which was recently translated into English by Lady Herschell, and forms not only an instructive but an amusing study. Few thinking men can doubt that the class



affected would almost to a man be better off in the Workhouse than on the streets. A large proportion would not be driven to the Workhouse, but to self-supporting labour. And none will be found to urge that he who lives by cadging and charity would not be raised higher, both morally and physically, by exchanging his life for that of a Labour Home.

It would hardly be honest to claim that any striking reform must in this way be effected, when experience seems to show that most thoughtless people will always think more of the present than the future. Even the discipline of Germany fails to prevent the peasant from indulging his short-sighted emotion, when the tramp or the loafer tells his woeful tale. Tramps (at least in rural parts) are not extinct in Germany; and some prominent supporters of the colony system admit the fact that begging is not everywhere diminished. But whether large or small, the effect of Labour Homes must be in this direction; even our own personal experience tells us of many cases where it would be so.

This benefit—the limiting of harmful charity—applies both to town and country. The profession of tramping flourishes equally in each, and each has casual wards filled with a class which corrupt those who are driven to mix with it. Guardians have here a twofold opportunity. On the one hand, they could find here and there a man or woman who could be restored to independence by the Labour Home; on the other hand, they would, by making the Homes better known to the public, help to limit the almsgiving which produces and maintains the tramp class. The public is not satisfied with the provision afforded by the casual ward to the unemployed, and gives to the loafer on the chance of his being genuinely out of work. If the Poor Law and private charity are in active co-operation, part at least of the public will be satisfied to let these agencies do their work unmolested.

This hope is vindicated by the experience of the Lodging-House Union Scheme of the Church Army. This Union has numerous lodging-houses with labour yards attached, where the applicant must work to earn his lodging and board. The public are urged to give tickets of admission instead of money ; and so few of the applicants present themselves that it pays the Church Army to sell fourpenny tickets at one penny. There is evidence from many Guardians, and from the Charity Organisation Society, that this system, by lessening almsgiving, has largely diminished the number of tramps in several places.

(*b.*) In the second place, their existence minimises those panics which arise when an exceptionally hard winter causes much unemployment. Then the tender-hearted public rushes into experiment, of the result of which all are familiar from the history of the Mansion House Fund, and forms funds which not only draw people to the towns, but discourage the independent poor from exertion.

The evil effect of that fund would never have occurred if a system of Labour Homes had been in existence.

### III.

We come now to the third virtue of Labour Homes. It is this that they enable the authorities to be stricter. It is claimed in Germany that the police have greatly reduced begging by increased activity, and that this activity has been brought about by the influence of the colonies on public opinion. The number of prisoners for begging fell from 23,000 in 1885 to 13,000 in 1890, and has remained at the latter level. When the public are satisfied that the provision made for indigent people gives the honest man a chance, then, and not till then, are the police allowed to deal severely with those who demand still further provision, and demand it often with threats from the poor who can least

afford it. Here again it cannot be claimed that this result is complete; I myself know a village in Germany where the burgomaster, whose duty it is to arrest tramps, not only relieves himself of that trouble, but feeds them at his own door. It is, however, admitted by all that in populous places begging is a very risky venture. In this country magistrates and police fail to carry out the law by which begging can be punished by three months in prison. Public opinion is against it. Thus low life is encouraged, the rich victimised, and the poor robbed. But if the public realises that a better chance is offered to the hopeful cases than the casual ward, the Workhouse, or the prison, why should we despair of bringing about such strictness, whether by way of punishment for begging, or detention for repeated idleness, as would deter great numbers from joining the lowest ranks? With public opinion thus educated, it might even be possible to start penal colonies, like those of Berlin and Dresden, and to punish cadging as well as begging.

The laws of Saxony permit the commune of Dresden to consign loafers, drunkards, prostitutes, and family neglecters to a Penal Workhouse, called the *Arbeitsanstalt*, or labour institution, by order of the Commune Official for the Poor Law Department. Quite apart from the ordinary law, and without the preliminary of poverty, he may sentence such people for any period under two years. There were, when I visited the place, one hundred and fifty men and one hundred women. Most of the latter are there for six months or more. Various trades are carried on, including the making of mats, brooms, and paper bags. The discipline is strict, but differs from that of a prison, the governing idea being that of reclamation, not of punishment.

In this way the most vicious of the people whose character was manifest in their appearance are kept



from contaminating the town. Many are improved and placed in situations.

In another very practical way the Homes assist the law, viz., by enabling Guardians to offer the pauper the means of self-support. They send him to the Home, and if he refuses to work there, or returns to the Workhouse, they prosecute him for refusing to maintain himself. This is a help much valued by many Boards.

Without further enlarging on the merits of Labour Homes, we may point to the fact that the Local Government Board has allowed Guardians since 1893 to pay for the keep of paupers in the Homes, as showing that the system has the support of the most expert and scientific authorities.

It is not in the scope of this paper to enlarge further on the work. We have seen how Labour Homes tend to accomplish three great objects. These we do well to bear in mind.

1. They restore to self-support many who would otherwise become or remain members of the dependent class.

2. They limit thoughtless and harmful almsgiving.

3. They facilitate the suppression of mendicancy by force.

It will readily be admitted that any one of these is worthy of trouble and expense. Supposing even that no restorations were effected, the other gains would justify the existence of Labour Homes.

### DANGERS.

It remains to meet the objections which can be urged.

1. One danger, that of attracting indifferent workmen from regular work, has already been touched on.

2. It would also be dangerous to encourage the idea that in any time of distress work will be found

by a public body ; but with private bodies this danger is minimised, and both these objections are met by the limiting of admissions to suitable cases.

3. There are some Boards of Guardians who might be so free in sending people to the Homes, as practically to make the offer to any one applying at the Relief Office. This, however, the Local Government Board has taken steps to prevent, and with Homes which adopt the carefully exclusive system, it would be impossible. It is not an objection to the practice of sending suitable persons.

4. The great cost of relief employment, as against relief without employment, has been found fault with. In the case of stone-breaking, at St Olave's and other Unions, the extra cost of material and supervision was doubtless far greater than the value of produce. Apart, however, from the moral benefit of employment, it must be noted that private Labour Homes work with far greater economy, and some of them practically pay their way.

The Lingfield Home feeds its men for 7d. a day, or 4s. a week ; some of them are as useful as farm hands who would earn 15s. a week.

5. Finally, it is urged that the system forms a departure from the policy of the law, according to which the public authority offers to the unemployed the Workhouse, and will not find him work elsewhere. Mr T. Mackay, in an article which condemns relief employment, points out, however, that the reference of selected cases is no breach of the principle, and quotes Mr Vallance in support of this contention, as follows (in reference to the Whitechapel cases sent to a farm colony) :—

“The Guardians had no intention of seeking a relaxation of the conditions of relief to the able-bodied as a class, but only to justify the rule of a strict application of the Workhouse test, by co-operating with voluntary agencies,” in certain special cases.

And again, Mr Vallance speaks of the experiment as “a possible development of the Workhouse system.”

There seems to be no unanswerable objection to the system, provided it followed the lines we have indicated.

### CO-OPERATION WITH UNIONS.

If the merits of Labour Homes be admitted, it follows that co-operation between them and Boards of Guardians is desirable.

Fortunately, it exists already to a very large extent. The Church Army officers visit almost every Workhouse and casual ward in London at frequent intervals, and arrange with the Union Officials as to cases they may have, which are possibly suitable for help.

In this way there were taken into their Homes—

From London Workhouses.				Casual Wards.	Total.
In 1895	-	-	184	144	328
„ 1896	-	-	155	251	406
„ 1897	-	-	171	367	538
<hr/>				<hr/>	<hr/>
510				762	1272

Whereas in 1892, of the 803 cases admitted to the Church Army London Homes, only 284 were Poor Law cases. In 1897, 538 came from Unions.

In Whitechapel the officer interviews the labour-master, as well as the master, and also explains the matter to the able-bodied inmates. He then corresponds with the master before the case is received, or sometimes the man discharges himself and applies at the Church Army office without the master's intervention. The latter may thus be unaware of the man's removal to the Home, but his going there is none the less due in many instances to the Church Army officer's visit. The statistics supplied by the Church Army will explain the extent of the work.



Those received from the Workhouse and passed through numbered :—

	1895.	1896.	1897.	In the last three Years.
	2	4	5	11
Situations, - ...	...	3	3	6
Left, - - 2	2	1	...	3
Dismissed, - ...	...	...	1	1
Infirmary, - ...	...	...	1	1
	—	—	—	—
	2	4	5	11

From the Casual Ward :—

	1895.	1896.	1897.	In the last three Years.
	10	12	20	42
Sent to Friends, ...	...	1	...	1
Situations, - 5	5	3	10	18
Left, - - 4	4	6	5	15
Dismissed, - 1	1	2	4	7
Hospital, - ...	...	...	1	1
	—	—	—	—
	10	12	20	42

The Whitechapel officials have orders to report cases which seem capable of reformation, and to tell such people of the Homes, and notices explaining the matter are hung in the Casual Ward and the Workhouse.

The master reports that an officer calls weekly. He adds that his inmates think the work too hard at the Labour Home, and declare that “the Church Army want too much of us, and we can’t earn enough.” This is a high compliment, for they are men “whose praise is censure, and whose censure is praise.”

Again, as we have seen, many Boards send cases with a view to *prosecuting* them if they will not work.

During 1897, the Lambeth Guardians obtained

sentences against six in this way—Hackney four, and Bethnal Green one. The sentences varied from three to six weeks ; one was six months. Others, who were sent with a view to prosecution, either did consent to work at the Home or kept themselves elsewhere without returning to the Workhouse.

Lingfield has had nine cases from Workhouses—Kensington, Paddington, Stepney, and St Saviour's. The Guardians provided them with suitable clothes, and pay 5s. a week for them. Four of them were lads, trained in Workhouse Schools, who are then more likely to get free from pauper taint before starting life.

There is thus a large amount of co-operation already. Moreover, the Guardians have leave now from the Local Government Board to pay for the keep of their paupers in Labour Homes to the extent of 5s. a week. Many of them do this, but the Church Army prefer a donation by way of payment for results, and refuse the weekly 5s., because of its effect upon the case. It prevents his feeling that he is earning his living, and he refuses to work hard, when he can say that he is being paid for.

These arrangements between Boards and Guardians and Labour Homes only need to be extended to every Union, to produce a very marked benefit.

Their effect, on the one hand, is to restore to self-support and rate-paying power a large number who would have remained living at the ratepayers' expense.

On the other hand, when it could be said that all the Unions were in touch with Labour Homes, and that any hopeful case applying to them would have a chance of rising by industry, then, and not till then, could an effective appeal be made to the public to withhold their foolish gifts. When we no longer feel, that in sending a man to the Workhouse we are possibly damaging his life, then will the polluting stream of careless charity begin to run low. Such an effective appeal is the goal to be kept in view.

Mr BERNARD WILSON asked whether these German agencies were self-supporting or subsidised by the State.

Mr NOEL BUXTON replied that they were partly supported by private subscriptions, partly by local public bodies, partly by the provincial authority, and partly by the State.

Rev. WICKHAM TOZER (Ipswich) said that when he appeared at the Norwich Conference three years ago he had a great deal to say, a great deal more than some people liked, and possibly that might also be the case on the present occasion. He would be sorry to say a word that would be likely to discourage efforts that were being made to deal with one of the most difficult classes that there was to be dealt with. At the same time he would like to disabuse the mind of the Conference of the idea that these Labour Colonies and Homes were going to effect a cure. He was struck first of all with the very small measure of success attending the scheme—(hear, hear)—and still more with the enormous cost of it. He happened to be intimately acquainted with one of the Homes that had been described, and he knew perfectly well that to start it thousands of pounds had to be privately subscribed. The system of emigration was what he believed in. Six months' training on the land was needed and good feeding, for brain and muscle could not be made without good feeding, and then the man was ready to be shipped off to one of the colonies. Here was a system which, if expanded, would meet a great many more cases than would the system adopted in the Labour Homes and Labour Colonies. He was afraid that the reader of the paper had not had quite so much to do with emergencies as he himself had in regard to the unemployed. He had had a very considerable experience of that class here in Norwich, and still more in Ipswich. He remembered that on the Castle Grounds there were five or six thousand men gathered on one occasion, together with the Mayor and the City Surveyor, who proposed to select from them men who could be put to work at a good wage. By no possibility could fifty of them be selected; he picked out twenty-five, and offered to pay their wages to the place where the work was to be done. Only about six really started for this place, and out of these there were three rogues who travelled there at his expense, and then never did a stroke of work. (Laughter.) How were people of this sort to be dealt with? Suppose that in Ipswich there were five hundred men out of employ, and suppose the town was willing to send them to General Booth, what would he be able to do with them? Some of them would be tailors who had never done a day's shovelling in their lives, and with poor tender fingers worse than a parson's. He had gone through a miscellaneous class of men over and over again until he had been heart-sick of the whole business. No one kind of employment, nor half-a-dozen kinds of employment, would meet the emergency of a great body of unemployed thrown on to the community. The only thing to be done was to get at the cause of these people being what they were, and in order to do this



one would have to go deep down into a great many questions that were not remotely touched on in Mr Buxton's paper. Beautiful and clever as that paper was, it did not deal with practical, common, everyday causes. There were the early marriages to be considered—(hear, hear)—and the multiplication of children beyond the capacity and power of the people to maintain them. An enervated mother produced enervated children that became physically and mentally incapable of earning a living, and were from their birth onwards more or less idiotic and unfit for the battle of life. Until men could be made to see that it was wickedness to inflict a curse like that on the children that were born to them, there would always be a multiplication of poor imbeciles. There were many of these deep questions that would have to be handled seriously and carefully if the evil was to be met. Many things being everlastingly talked about were mere palliatives. What they wanted was prevention rather than cure.

Mr G. KING (St Faith's) expressed the opinion that society was all unhinged and out of gear, and that there was no remedy short of acting on the principle of doing unto others as you would be done by.

Mr F. J. CROTCH said Mr Tozer, as usual, had had a dig at Norwich, but he also had had some experience of the unemployed. Every movement of the kind since the riot in Trafalgar Square he had been associated with, either as secretary or treasurer, and on the last occasion he and two others were requested by the Mayor and the leading members of the Corporation to take up the case of the unemployed, and they did it, he thought, to the general satisfaction. In fact he was the only person not unemployed who called a big meeting, held during the year when Mr Gurney was Mayor of the city. The bill calling the meeting was signed by three persons besides himself. It was a risky meeting to hold. All the police were at the Guildhall ready for an emergency, the gates of the Cathedral Close were shut, and the soldiers were kept in barracks. The meeting, however, was held, and a deputation was sent to the Mayor. Of those who signed the bill, one was now managing the building of a technical school that would cost £20,000; another had been foreman to Mr Lacey, and then to Mr Yelf, the builders, and another had held a situation with good constant work for the last twelve years. He did not think that the men who met Mr Tozer on Castle Hill were a good type of the genuine unemployed. They were probably drovers having a spree with him. Why, Mousehold Heath was beautified by the unemployed, who formed what was practically a Labour Colony for the time being, making the roads and adorning the Heath. The unemployed had to show that they wanted work. He remembered that Mr Adie and himself received an invitation to meet Mr Garrett Taylor, who was authorised by Mr J. J. Colman to set fifty men to work at Whittingham, and engage them for a probable two months' work if they were suitable. Accordingly fifty men were selected. Out of that number forty-nine turned up at Whittingham, and for two months they were kept at work. Mr

Tozer's unemployed probably thought he was joking with them. Many years ago there was a famous humbug who attracted twenty thousand people on to Mousehold, and ever since then people in Norwich had been rather suspicious about strangers. Go through the streets of the city, and you could see men who had been shoemakers all their lives going about with a little box of herring rather than apply for relief to the Board of Guardians. There were other men, something like fifty of them, at work on the new sewer. They knew nothing of that kind of work; but they had been driven to it by the dreadful state of the shoe trade. The first week these men went into the sewer pits they had black eyes and swollen hands. The swelling of the hands was caused by using unaccustomed tools, and the black eyes were due to the fact that the men had not strength to shovel the stone up high enough, so that it fell back upon their heads and faces. The unemployed were ready enough for work if they were properly handled. Again, within the last two years the Corporation had been depositing granite along the roadside, and he had seen these men sitting in the snow breaking the granite at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{4}$ d. a bushel, many of them being so unused to the work that they took a whole day to break three bushels. He did not like to kick a man who was down. But on the other hand he was quite prepared to accept the principle that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. (Applause.)

Mr T. B. HUBBARD (Mitford and Launditch) said he had come to the Conference with the strong desire to hear something that would be of practical use to him and his brother Guardians. But up to the present he was disappointed. When he returned home, he would be at a loss to tell his brother Guardians anything that would benefit them. The time had come when it would be well to consider whether the Conferences could be reorganised with a view to making them of some practical use. They had heard a good deal about Germany and London, but very little that bore upon the work of Poor Law Guardians in Norfolk.

The CHAIRMAN—We can hardly enter into that question while we are considering Mr Buxton's paper. Perhaps you will be able to speak on this subject when we discuss where the next place of meeting shall be.

Mr HUBBARD—We have come here for no practical good whatever.

Mr J. W. WARREN put in a word for the tramps, saying that those who visited St Faith's Workhouse would find that some very nice work had been done there by people who were sometimes spoken of as worthless. People of this sort could often be made to work if they were properly managed, and he would welcome any scheme under which they would be so treated, and got back into regular working habits. We had reformatories working with excellent results in the case of children, and it was high time that some similar means should be adopted with a view to the reformation of adults. It was no cure to put a man into prison for two or three weeks, and then set him loose to go cadging again.

Mr BERNARD WILSON said—Three or four years ago an institution similar to what Mr Buxton advocated was started in Holland,



but eventually it became such a tax on the community that they would stand it no longer, and it had to be given up. The idea of Mr Buxton seemed to be that Workhouses ought to be supplemented with farms and places in which labour could be profitably employed. He was certain that a farm carried on upon this system would be an utter failure, for under present conditions farmers found it impossible even with the greatest care to make the land pay. In the same way tradesmen found that competition was so keen in business that only by the most careful management could they make ends meet. Mr Buxton's proposal amounted to this, that the community should subsidise productive labour. The ratepayers would have to pay for the maintenance of more or less idle people, while they were producing things which the ratepayers themselves lived by producing. It would be a vast discouragement to little people to see all this trouble and expense bestowed by the community on those who, as a rule, were idle vagabonds, while they themselves, including hard-working labourers, were left behind and forgotten. He could imagine no greater discouragement to honest labour. He had himself seen Mr Booth's establishment. Mr Booth had done wonders; but it could not be claimed that the system answered the purpose so far as to produce at a profit.

Mr WALKER (Woodbridge) said his experience was that no good labourer ever needed to go without work, and as for tramps, they would not work under any circumstances.

Mr NOEL BUXTON then replied on the discussion. He said the remarks of the last speaker showed the necessity for Labour Homes. Mr Walker would admit that there were a very large number of people who lived upon the labour of the rest of the community, and who were not willing to do any hard work themselves. These people were being supported very unwisely by the community. The existence of Labour Homes would induce a good many people who would otherwise give their money in careless gifts to withhold those gifts, and thus the Homes would do something to diminish one class of paupers. It was only natural that a good deal of suspicion and doubt should be thrown upon the advantages of an institution such as he had sketched, especially as those who had spoken that afternoon on the subject had evidently devoted very little thought to it. These institutions existed throughout England in large industrial towns, and also in the smaller towns, such as Derby and Exeter. They were well known elsewhere, and had met with the general approval of the community. When he spoke of a Labour Colony, he did not confine himself to a farm, for he thought there were great objections to that sort of colony. If there were small Labour Homes in Norwich and Ipswich such as there were in Derby and Exeter, a great many people in Norfolk and Suffolk would be restrained from wasting their money and encouraging a class of vicious and idle people. Of course no institution that could be established would accomplish a complete reform, but a thing that effected a certain amount of good was surely worth attempting. There would always



be unemployed, and there would always be tramps, but the Labour Homes in various parts of the country had already done much good. Even if the Homes were not self-supporting, in this respect they were only on a level with a large number of institutions that were generally recognised as indispensable. He thought it would be a good thing to establish a Labour Home in every town in East Anglia.

#### THE NEXT PLACE OF MEETING.

Mr VULLIAMY said that next year the Conference ought to be held in Suffolk, according to rotation.

Mr HUBBARD said he had the consent of the Chairman to continue the remarks he was going to make some time before on the absence of any practical result of the Conference. He represented a large agricultural district, and he must confess that he had failed to gain at that Conference any information that would be of the slightest value to him. He thought they ought to reorganise the Conference, to remodel it, so that at a Conference held in Norfolk papers should be read that dealt with pauperism in Norfolk. This was the subject he wanted information upon, and not pauperism in Germany and in London. He thought it would be a great advantage if the twenty-one Unions of Norfolk had a Conference of their own. As it was, he felt that that was very much a lost day for him, and a good many of his agricultural friends agreed with him. He moved that a Conference for the county of Norfolk alone should be held.

Mr BLOCK (Wangford) seconded the motion, and said he thought it very desirable that each county should have its own Conference.

Mr HUBBARD—We have heard of Germany and we have heard of London, but we have not heard anything whatever of Norfolk, Suffolk, or Essex. I should be glad to co-operate with Suffolk and Essex if we can confine our papers to subjects interesting to these counties.

The CHAIRMAN said the proposal had better be that a separate Conference be organised for each of the three counties.

Rev. WICKHAM TOZER thought it would be very unfortunate if a resolution of this kind were passed at the tail end of the Conference, when many of the representatives had gone. It gave the representatives of Suffolk and Essex no opportunity of expressing their opinion as to whether they were disposed to part with the Norfolk men, for whom they had such very high regard, and who, as everybody knew, were so practical in the administration of the Poor Law that their counsel was always worth having. (Laughter.) They were not prepared to part with gentlemen such as they had listened to that day. Speaking for Suffolk, he hoped there would be no separation. The attendance that day was small, and if they were going to separate into three atoms the meetings could be held in one of their parlours.

Rev. H. S. FULLAGAR thought it would be a pity for the Conference to separate into three distinct organisations. Mr Hubbard had complained that the Conference had not been practical, but he

had not suggested what could be done to make it practical. He was certain no improvement would be effected by dividing the Conference into three.

The CHAIRMAN said if this motion was carried, he would not be surprised if at the next Conference a proposal was made that there should be a separate Conference for town Guardians and for rural Guardians, so they might continue the process of disintegration.

Mr F. J. CROTCH supported the proposal. Norfolk alone could form as large a Conference as that of to-day, and if they had papers read on their own subjects, it would be more beneficial.

The resolution was rejected, 7 voting for, and 12 against it.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not at all agree that the Conference had not been attractive. He had seldom listened to the reading of two papers from which he had learned more, or which he had heard with more engrossing interest.

Mrs SEWELL (Colchester) moved that the next Conference be held at Ipswich, and declared that she had learned a great deal from the papers.

Mr WALKER seconded the motion, and it was adopted.

Mr BAGENAL moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman and to the readers of the papers. For practical works, and for upholding the dignity of the chair, Mr Pelham Burn had proved a worthy successor of the late Canon Copeman. With regard to the papers, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the practical bearing they had upon rural life, no one could say that they were not full of interest, and that they had not been prepared with great care. The papers certainly provided them with some new thoughts for their consideration hereafter. The pauperism of Norfolk had absorbed a great deal of his attention, and he was bound to say that it presented problems that it was almost impossible to solve. It was not a good thing to confine oneself to one particular problem, and it was well at times to pay some attention to other problems that were exercising the minds of men who had the leisure and the ability to deal with them. He did not think they could have had more interesting papers from the point of view of the general student than those that had been read that day.

The motion was carried.

The CHAIRMAN said he was extremely grateful to Mr Vulliamy for having asked him to preside at the meeting. He absolutely disagreed with the criticisms that had been passed upon the papers, and the speeches they had had. He, at all events, had found a great deal in Mrs Shaen's paper to give him thought. They ought to be very grateful to Mr Buxton for having attended the Conference at great personal trouble and inconvenience to read a paper on a subject upon which most of those present were not fully informed. After all, they must remember, Norfolk was not the whole world, and it was rather important that Norfolk men should know something of what was going on in other parts of England, in order that they might bring the administration of the Poor Law to the highest possible level.

This concluded the proceedings.

# South-Eastern and Metropolitan District.

## REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
SOUTH-EASTERN AND METROPOLITAN POOR LAW  
DISTRICT (COMPRISING THE COUNTIES OF LON-  
DON, KENT, SUSSEX, SURREY, BERKS, AND HANTS),  
HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE SOCIETY OF  
ARTS, JOHN STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.,  
ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, THE 8TH AND 9TH  
DECEMBER 1898.

*President*—W. BOUSFIELD, ESQ., J.P.,

*Chairman of the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences.*

The following Unions were represented at the Conference.

\* Guardians specially delegated by their Boards.

### BERKS (12 Unions).

#### ABINGDON—

- \*Cannon, A.
- \*Clutterbuck, Rev. F. C.
- \*Challenor, B. (Clerk).

#### BRADFIELD—

- \*Collier, S. G.
- Slatter, Rev. Canon.
- \*Stevens, A. C.
- \*Trotman, J.
- Willink, H. G. (Chairman).

#### MAIDENHEAD—

- \*Cox, C. W.
- \*Weall, W.
- \*Weed, W. (Clerk).

#### READING—

- \*Bailey, Mrs
- \*Kift, C. (Clerk)
- \*Vinden, Mr

} First Day.

### BERKS—*Continued.*

#### READING—*Continued.*

- \*Buker, Miss
- \*France, W.
- \*Hickie, W.
- \*Huggins, E. J. W. (Assis-  
tant Clerk)
- Ackerman, D. W. B.

} Second  
Day.

#### WALLINGFORD—

- \*Brown, Rev. J.
- \*King, J. P. (Chairman).
- \*Slade, G. F. (Clerk).

### HANTS (26 Unions).

#### ALVERSTOKE—

- \*Field, W. O. (Clerk).
- \*Rogers, R. H. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Tanner, Rev. C. (Chairman).



HANTS—*Continued.*

## BASINGSTOKE—

- \*Lawford, Lot.
- \*Tarbolton, Rev. A. C.

## HARTLEY WINTNEY—

- \*Berry, J.
- \*Hitchcock, A.
- Johnston, J. Lindsay (Chairman).

## NEW WINCHESTER—

Bromfield, Miss.

## PETERSFIELD—

- \*Shield, J. R.

## PORTSEA ISLAND—

- \*Bishop, J. (Chairman).
- \*Mitchell, E. H. (Clerk).
- Palin, H.
- \*Ward, W. (Vice-Chairman).

## SOUTH STONEHAM—

- \*Hayward, P. B.

## WHITCHURCH—

- \*Richards, J.

## KENT (26 Unions).

## DOVER—

- \*Carder, Eugene (Clerk).

## EASTRY—

- \*Payne, Rev. Bruce.

## ELHAM—

- \*Peden, G.
- \*Spurgeon, G.

## FAVERSHAM—

- \*Berry, B. G.
- \*Michell, W. J.

## MALLING—

- \*Hawkes, J.
- \*Wigan, W. S.

## MEDWAY—

- Evans, Mrs.
- Godsiff, R.
- Hill, T.
- \*Hurrell, H.
- \*Norman, A. Reynolds.
- \*Stigant, Adam (Chairman).
- Waters, W.

KENT—*Continued.*

## STROOD—

- \*Povey, J. E.
- \*Prall, G. W. (Clerk).

## WEST ASHFORD—

- \*Edwards, T. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Langley, G. (Clerk).
- \*Offen, J. J.
- \*Pledge, W. (Chairman).

## LONDON (30 Unions).

## BETHNAL GREEN—

- \*James, Miss M. E.

## FULHAM—

- \*Lawson, Peter.

## GREENWICH—

Lambert, Rev. Brooke.

## HACKNEY—

- \*Barralet, Mrs.
- \*Brown, Mrs Ladd.

## HAMPSTEAD—

- \*Herford, Miss H. B.
- \*Viner, Miss F. A.

## HOLBORN—

- \*Baker, Miss.

## KENSINGTON—

- \*Reade, Rev. C. Darby.

## LAMBETH—

- \*Andrew, Captain C. W.
- \*Dunn Gardner, Mrs R.
- \*Despard, Miss.
- \*Turner, J. E.

## LEWISHAM—

- \*Brown, W. (Chairman).
- \*Huggett, A.
- \*Keech, R.
- \*Kemp, J. D.
- Penford, P.

## PADDINGTON—

- \*Birch, Major-General F. M.
- \*Humphry, Miss.
- \*Huntley, Col. H. C.

## POPLAR—

- \*Crooks, W.
- \*Kimbel, S.
- \*Poole, C. S.

LONDON—*Continued.*

## ST GEORGE'S EAST—

- \*Cartwright, Miss H. L.
- Cowie, Miss.
- \*Seddon, Miss A. E.

## ST OLAVE'S—

- \*Taylor, T.

## ST PANCRAS—

- \*Lidgett, Miss E. S.
- \*Sheppard, G. F.

## ST SAVIOUR'S—

- \*Watts, S.

## SHOREDITCH—

- \*Nicholson, C. N.

## STEPNEY—

- \*East, Mrs F. A.
- \*Mitchell, W. H.
- \*O'Connor, J.

## STRAND—

- \*Bailey, W. J.
- \*Painton, Miss M.

## WANDSWORTH AND CLAPHAM—

- \*Brooks, Mr.
- \*Cackett, Mrs.
- \*Henderson, A. N. (Clerk).
- \*Milligan, D. (Chairman).

## WHITECHAPEL—

- \*Brown, J. (Chairman).
- \*Vallance, W. (Clerk).
- \*Wharley, E.

## SURREY (II Unions).

## CHERTSEY—

- \*Bravington, W. (Chairman).
- \*Chambers, G.

## CROYDON—

- \*Drew, Miss R. M.
- \*List, H. (Clerk).
- \*Morland, C. C.
- \*Trythall, J. A. (Vice-Chairman).

## EPSOM—

- Braithwaite, B.
- \*Brown, W. S. J.
- \*Morrissey, Rev. T.
- Phillips, Rev. Canon.
- \*Reader, W. O. (Clerk).
- \*Shaw, Rev. J.

SURREY—*Continued.*

## FARNHAM—

- \*Clinton, Mrs.
- \*Croucher, Mr.
- \*Mangles, Miss.

## HAMBLEDON—

- \*Borrowman, Mr.
- \*Welch, Mr.

## KINGSTON—

Gosset, J. J. (Vice-Chairman).

## RICHMOND—

- \*Dimbleby, F. W. (Vice-Chairman).
- \*Huntly, Lieut.-Col.
- \*Newton, Miss Foster.
- \*Sparks, Colonel (Chairman).

## SUSSEX (23 Unions).

## BATTLE—

- Egerton, Miss G. R.
- Egerton, Hon. Mrs C.

## CUCKFIELD—

Weekes, Arthur.

## EASTBOURNE—

- Brodie-Hall, Miss W. L.
- \*Crake, Rev. E. E.
- \*Eden, J.
- Jeffrey, Leonard.
- \*Maude, A. H.

## HASTINGS—

- \*Henbrey, A. C.
- \*Hunter, H.
- Mosley, Miss S.

## HORSHAM—

- Hamilton, Gen. Sir W. S., Bart.
- \*Harrington, James.
- \*Powell, Rev. R. W.
- \*Riley, J. J.

## STEYNING—

- \*Field, Rev. S. A.
- \*Hooper, Rev. R. P. (Chairman).

## THAKEHAM—

- \*Palmer, Rev. H. (Chairman).
- \*Wyatt, H. R. P.

## VISITORS.

Stansfield, Miss	} Local Government Board.	Bartholomew, E.
Mason, Miss		Beach, Dr Fletcher.
Fleming, Baldwyn		Browlow, Mrs.
Andrew, Arthur		Clamp, Mr.
Aspinall, Rev. G. E.	} Members of Central Committee of Poor Law Conference.	Denchfield, J. A.
Clifford, Miss		Dixon, Miss.
Cropper, Hon. Mrs		Egerton, Lady Louisa.
Hocking, Rev. J. H.		Halsey, E. J.
Pell, Albert		Lascelles, Mrs Eaton.
Rhodes, Dr J. M.		Lonsdale, Miss S.
Sperling, A.		Mackay, T.
Stacey, Miss Agatha		Shuttleworth, Dr G. E.
Strutt, Hon. F.		Taylor, Dr F.
Whittaker, J.		Vernon, Miss.
Bailward, W. A.		Whittaker, Mrs.

The following Unions were not represented at the Conference :—

BERKS. — Easthampstead, Faringdon, Hungerford, \*Newbury, Wantage, Windsor, and Wokingham.

HANTS.—Alresford, Alton, Andover, Catherington, Christchurch, Droxford, Fareham, Fordingbridge, Havant, Hursley, Isle of Wight, \*Kingsclere, Lymington, New Forest, Ringwood, Romsey, and Stockbridge.

KENT.—Blean, \*Bromley, Bridge, Canterbury, Cranbrook, Dartford, East Ashford, Gravesend, Hollingbourne, Hoo, Isle of Thanet, \*Maidstone, Milton, Romney Marsh, Sevenoaks, Sheppey, Tenterden, and Tonbridge.

LONDON. — Camberwell, Chelsea, City of London, Islington, Mile End, St George's, St Giles, St Marylebone, Westminster, and Woolwich.

SURREY.—Dorking, Godstone, Guildford, and Reigate.

SUSSEX.—Brighton, Chailey, Chichester, East Grinstead, East Preston, Hailsham, Lewes, Midhurst, Newhaven, Petworth, Rye, Ticehurst, Uskfield, Westbourne, West Firle, and West Hampnett.

*Note.*—The four Unions marked with an asterisk paid for admission of representatives to the Conference, although they were not represented at the Conference itself.

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## THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER.

Mr W. BOUSFIELD took the chair at 11.15 A.M. The Hon. Secretary (Mr W. Chance) stated that letters of apology for inability to be present had been received from the following, viz., Mr H. Chaplin, M.P., the President of the Local Government Board; Mr T. W. Russell, M.P., the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board; Sir Walter Foster, M.P.; Lord Thring; Sir J. T. Hibbert, K.C.B.; Lord Monteagle; Mr G. E. Lloyd-Baker, J.P.; Mr Beattie; Canon Hignett; Mr Spear; Captain Griffith Boscawen; Mr T. Cozens-Hardy; Mr Boughton Knight; Canon Denton; Mr H. J. Hagger; and Mr Cecil Clapp.

The Hon. Secretary then read the Report of the Committee as follows:—

The Committee are glad to be able to report that the interest which is taken by Boards of Guardians in these Conferences shows no signs of diminishing. This year 54 Boards of Guardians have paid for the admission of representatives to the Conference, of which 35 are country and 19 London Boards.

The Committee have pleasure in drawing attention to the favourable state of the finances. After payment of all expenses connected with last year's Conference, there remained a balance in the hands of the Hon. Secretary of £3. 2s. 3½d. A full Statement of Accounts was sent to every Board of Guardians in the two districts in January last.

The Committee also desire to thank the Boards of Guardians for the support which they have rendered to these Conferences by ordering copies of the Reports for the use of their members; and they would take the opportunity to record their thanks to the publishers, Messrs P. S. King & Son, Orchard House, Westminster, for the careful way in which the Reports have been drawn up.

The Committee are glad to be able to congratulate the Conference on their having again secured the services of their President and Vice-Presidents for another year. Three vacancies among the co-optative members of the Committee have been filled by the election of the Hon. Mrs Charles Egerton (Battle Union), Miss Baker (Holborn Union), and Mr Morton Latham (Farnham Union).

In conclusion, the Committee would ask that the question should be considered whether the time has not come for the Metropolitan Poor Law Conferences to be recalled into a separate existence. The problems of Poor Law Administration present themselves in a very different light in London and in the provinces, and many questions which have an intense interest for country Guardians affect very slightly the practical work of Metropolitan Guardians. It is quite unnecessary to give examples, because they will occur at once to Guardians who have been constant attenders at these Conferences.

But it may be well to recall the circumstances under which the

Metropolitan Poor Law Conferences became merged in those of the South-Eastern District. This event did not take place till 1889, although it appears that no Metropolitan Conference in connection with the system of Poor Law Conferences had been held since 1881. They seem to have fallen through in consequence of there being no one willing to undertake the task (either from want of time or from lack of interest in them) of working them up again from the state of lassitude into which they had fallen. After the lapse of a few years it seems to have been considered a pity that the Metropolitan Guardians should be shut out entirely from meeting to discuss among themselves Poor Law questions, and there being still no one willing to undertake the work of reorganising them, they were invited in 1889 to join the South-Eastern District Conferences, whose meetings were transferred to London in 1883. At the Conference of 1889, twenty of the thirty Metropolitan Boards were represented. After that year, however, the representation dropped until 1894, from which date the figures show a steadily increasing interest in the Conferences.

In 1890—11 Unions represented by 24 Members.

„ 1891— 6 „ „ 11 „

[No Conference was held in 1892.]

In 1893—11 Unions represented by 22 Members.

„ 1894—14 „ „ 25 „

„ 1895—19 „ „ 55 „

„ 1896—23 „ „ 57 „

„ 1897—22 „ „ 41 „

This year (1898) 19 Metropolitan Unions have paid for admission of 60 representatives to the Conference.\*

Is it too much to expect that the reorganisation of a Metropolitan Conference would bring all the London Unions to take part in them?

The Committee do not do more than draw attention to the point, but they cannot bring themselves to think that there is no one in the whole of this vast city who would be willing to volunteer to undertake the part of Hon. Secretary to a revived Metropolitan Poor Law Conference.

Surely what Lancashire can do London can do; and at the last North-Western Conference, out of thirty Lancashire Unions no fewer than twenty-eight were represented by 136 Guardians, and the Lancashire Guardians have to travel many more miles to reach the place of meeting than a Metropolitan Guardian would have to do to a Conference held in London.

The Committee hope that the London Unions represented at this Conference to-day will give the matter their serious consideration, and that possibly next year a London Conference and a South-

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\* Of these 60 representatives, 41 attended the Conference.

Eastern Conference may again be held separately. At the same time the Committee feel very strongly that it is better that the existing joint Conferences should be continued than that there should be another Metropolitan failure.

The PRESIDENT said—The report foreshadows a change in the organisation of these Conferences. I myself have been connected with these Conferences since the amalgamation of the deliberations of the Guardians of the South-Eastern Counties and the Metropolis, and I know the great difficulties that were found in London in obtaining an adequate attendance before the Metropolis was added to the South-Eastern District. It is quite possible that the increased interest in Poor Law matters which has recently been seen may result in the Metropolis being able in future to maintain a Conference of its own. But the report of the Committee throws the onus of such a scheme on the Metropolitan Guardians themselves, and I trust that no such plan will be carried into effect unless there is real ground for believing that the bulk of the Metropolitan Guardians will take up the matter. The amalgamation of the Metropolitan and South-Eastern Poor Law District was very largely the work of the late Mr Bland Garland, who came into communication with me in 1881, when, as Vice-Chairman of the old Metropolitan Poor Law Guardians Association, I entered into the present arrangement, which was subsequently approved by the Metropolitan Guardians.

During the year there has been an important step taken in regard to Poor Law work in the formation of the Poor Law Unions Association, which was the outcome of a resolution of the Central Poor Law Conference that a body having some executive powers, and able to take steps in reference to proposed legislation, should be formed. It has already come into existence, but its work has not yet been systematised or formulated. I trust it may have a valuable influence on Poor Law work, and that those who direct it may always work in co-operation with the various Committees of the Poor Law Conferences. (Hear, hear.) It will be brought into touch, no doubt, rather intimately with the Committee of the Central Poor Law Conference, and I have no doubt it will work harmoniously with that Committee. (Hear, hear.)

There are two branches of our work as Guardians which are of special importance. First, of providing for old people who are unable to maintain themselves; and second, of dealing with the children who, through no fault of their own, are chargeable to the rates; and the latter forms the more promising field if Guardians strive to train the children so that they shall never become paupers in after-life. Early training is everything. What results where there is default is seen in the tramp class, the lowest product of our civilisation. Blind optimistic faith in the goodness of human nature is not a guide for Poor Law administration. There is an enormous body of valuable matter, of deepest interest to Guardians, in the reports of the Inspectors pub-



lished in the Annual Report of the Local Government Board. I wish these could be printed separately and sent every year to each Guardian. I cannot imagine any arrangement which, at so small a cost, might be so beneficial. The reports show the supreme importance of careful administration, not only as regards economy of expenditure, but as contributing to the moral fibre of the poor. There is much truth in the saying, "Whatever is best administered is best;" and it is also true in Poor Law work, that careful administration, through investigation into each case, refusal of slipshod and wholesale methods of treating applicants for relief, lead to sound principles of relief as the result of the experience gained. I hope that the Conference will forgive me for putting together certain statistics collated from the reports of the Local Government Board, and dealing with their own district. It is a very remarkable thing that the fluctuations of pauperism in the Metropolis closely follow those in the country generally, and the figures for London and the counties comprised in the South-Eastern District are as follows:—

PAUPERISM, JULY 1897.

County and Population.		Indoor.	Outdoor.	Ratio per 1,000 of Population.		
				Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.
London,	-	62,290	51,865	14.0	11.6	25.6
4,463,000						
Surrey,	-	3,451	8,642	5.3	13.2	18.5
652,000						
Kent,	-	6,166	15,451	7.1	17.7	24.8
870,700						
Sussex,	-	4,209	12,958	7.1	21.8	28.9
594,000						
Hants,	-	4,577	16,506	6.3	22.7	29.0
72,800						
Berks,	-	2,046	4,580	7.3	16.3	23.6
281,000						
All England	- - - -			6.5	19.0	25.5

I feel certain that these variations largely arise from differences in the methods of administration. Mr Davy reports a decrease in number of paupers and amount of Poor Rate in Sussex, Kent, and part of Surrey, mainly owing to decrease in the Brighton Union, without change of method other than increased care. The organisation of Brighton as to out-relief might well be imitated by Guardians of any other large Union. The figures for that particular Union are:—

Week ending			Brighton.	Number of Paupers.	
			Cost Out-relief.	Outdoor.	Indoor.
Dec. 16, 1893	-	-	£198	2,201	1,474
„ 15, 1894	-	-	191	2,044	1,557
„ 14, 1895	-	-	189	1,930	1,570
„ 19, 1896	-	-	179	1,816	1,612
„ 18, 1897	-	-	172	1,668	1,497

This satisfactory state of affairs is due to better investigation and fuller consideration by Guardians, and by care in giving out-relief further reductions are possible. (Hear, hear.) Mr Baldwyn Fleming reports decrease in Dorset, Hants, and parts of Surrey and Wilts. His figures are :—

<i>Decrease—</i>				} Total Decrease, 781.
Dorset	-	-	234	
Hants	-	-	348	
Wilts -	-	-	249	
<i>Increase—</i>				}
Isle of Wight	-	-	27	
Farnham	-	-	23	

There was a decrease in both in and out-relief except in Hants, where indoor increase is 44. In Romsey Union the rate of pauperism per cent. of population was in 1888, 5.5, and in 1898, 1.8; while the rate in £ on rateable value was respectively 1s. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. That shows what can be done by care in administration. (Cheers.) It takes much care, time, and tact to reform a faulty administration, but the game is worth the candle. Some people do not consider a reduction in the rate of pauperism of a district to be a fact in itself of great advantage, but where this is the result of careful administration, producing a moral strengthening of the people, the greatest benefit which can be bestowed on the social conditions of a Union. Nothing checks self-respect and thrift like careless giving of relief and charity. A diminution of pauperism all over the country would be an untold blessing, and this can only be effected by careful individual work in the smaller areas which make up the whole. It should be possible, however, in the prosperous times in which we are now living. The Poor Law administrator needs a warm heart, but he needs equally the power of expressing his good-will in action according to the demands of reason, foresight, and experience. Mr Baldwyn Fleming's valuable report has been printed separately, and copies sent to the Guardians of his district. Every Guardian should study it. He says: "The influence of administration upon local character is remarkable. . . . Degradation does not lie in the name of pauper, but in the fact of dependence. . . . The evils of endowed charities unevenly bestowed are great. It is almost capable of proof that where such charity is given lavishly, pauperism is also greatest." I trust that at future Conferences it may be possible to give statistics showing further reductions in pauperism. (Hear, hear.) I hope that the Conference will bear with me while I say a word on the question of children. I have always considered that boarding-out, with proper supervision and in suitable homes, is the best possible arrangement for pauper children. It provides the most natural surroundings. There are large numbers for whom it is not available. In London especially we have to deal with vast numbers of children, and the methods can in many cases

hardly help being less individual than we could wish. Good administration is an enormous factor in the well-being of the children, whatever method is adopted. With the widespread interest taken in Metropolitan children, improvement in system and management will take place. In the country the main difficulty is with the children who live in the Workhouse and with those of vagrants. H.M. Inspectors' Reports are full of information on these points. The Workhouse not the best place for children, but is sometimes inevitable. But they ought in that case to go to the outside elementary school in ordinary dress. Unfortunately the difficulty of obtaining space for pauper children in elementary schools has restricted this practice. Some arrangement as to contributing from the rates to the increase of existing schools, whether Board or Voluntary, should be possible where necessary. Mr Fleming mentions the difficulty which is felt by Guardians of satisfactorily treating and supervising children who reside in the Workhouse during the holidays. The Warminster Guardians have adopted the excellent plan of boarding-out their Workhouse children during that period in places where they can have healthful recreation and no pauper surroundings.

It is, however, with regard to the children of vagrants and tramps that the greatest difficulty occurs, and relating to whom I believe the public conscience is most deeply stirred. The Bristol School Board have lately, in a letter sent to the principal School Boards in England, estimated that there were at least 30,000 juvenile vagrants who tramped the country with their actual or reputed parents without receiving any efficient education. They stated that these children were growing up ignorant and often vicious, under the inadequate means of dealing with them under the law as it stood at present, becoming habitual vagrants or criminals. There is little doubt of the general truth of these statements, and they add weight to the petition sent to the Local Government Board by this Conference in 1896, asking for a public inquiry into the whole subject of vagrancy, unfortunately without result.

It would be well worth the while of the ratepayers to expend large sums in reclaiming these children, and thereby enormously reduce the vagrant class of the future. The difficulty lies in the fact that common action of Guardians is necessary over large areas if the number of wandering children is to be sensibly diminished, and neither Guardians nor magistrates consider that the present state of the law enables them to detain, educate, and reclaim the children. If the Local Government Board will not initiate a public inquiry, a real step in advance would be taken if they would consider in what way the difficulty may be best met under existing laws, and issue a circular to Boards of Guardians on the subject. I believe this would be a certain prelude to legislation, though Poor Law administrators would be glad to avail themselves of any facilities now available.

I am sorry not to have seen yet the replies from Guardians to a circular on this subject, respecting which Mr Chance has called a



small meeting on Saturday. We must all feel the dilemma in which the State is placed. It is dangerous to interfere with the family tie and with parental responsibility for the children brought into the world. It seems inequitable also that the offspring of the vagrant should be maintained at the expense of the hardworking and thrifty, while he is allowed to go free. On the other hand, the tramp's child is an individual having its own rights of being protected by the community against the degradation and ruin which its natural guardians inflict upon it. It is also greatly in the public interest that the principal feeder of the future criminal class should be stopped, and that the expense of prisons and protection against crime, which also comes from the pockets of the workers, should be minimised as much as possible. I suppose we should all agree that the best course, if it were possible, would be to compel the vagrant himself to educate and bring up his children as respectable citizens. The Education Acts do now try and enforce this obligation, but without success, and I think all those who know the habits of the tramp must admit that the protection of these children by such ordinary methods is hopeless. The vagrant, while he remains a vagrant, cannot be trusted with the custody of the children. It does not follow, however, that he ought not to be punished for throwing his duties on other people. If possible, he should be made to pay for the cost of the children's maintenance by his own compulsory labour. I do not think it would be beyond the power of a Royal or Departmental Commission to devise convenient ways for thus getting the tramp to work, either in a prison or in the Workhouse, but new legislation would be needed. But even if it were not possible to adequately bring home to the tramp parent the consequences of his default, it seems to me that no time should be lost in the protection of his children. (Cheers.) We in England have benefited enormously by the independent character of our people, and those who are Poor Law administrators have great influence in moulding the character of those who are under our care, and are influenced by our action—the men and women of the future. We should do everything in our power to strengthen that tone of independence. The spread of the friendly societies is one of our greatest glories, and we should all co-operate in every possible way with those able and public-spirited men who have put those societies in a position to educate the industrial classes, so that in the future pauperism may be found among a very much smaller proportion of the population than at the present time. It is not safe from kindness of heart to scatter relief, whether from public or private sources, widely over a population. If we wish to spread habits of independence, we must throw some responsibility on the poor man himself. I do not know whether any of you have lately been reading Charlotte Brontë's novel, "Shirley." It depicts districts in Yorkshire during the great distress which prevailed owing to the action of Napoleon at the beginning of this century in closing foreign markets. It shows that in spite of great hardships and privation, the Yorkshire

working men were determined to do the best they could for themselves, and not to rely on private charity or out-relief, even at a time when out-relief was given to a much larger extent than now. In conclusion, I have only to say that I hope that we as Guardians shall do our best to leave Poor Law administration better than we found it. (Cheers.)

Mr E. J. HALSEY, Chairman of the Surrey County Council, then read the following paper:—

## VAGRANCY OUTSIDE OF LONDON.

BY E. J. HALSEY, ESQ.,

*Chairman of the Surrey County Council.*

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“THE great object of our early pauper legislation seems to have been the restraint of vagrancy,” are almost the opening words of the well-known Poor Law Commissioners’ Report of 1834, and it is interesting to trace out the progress of this legislation from and through the times of Richard II., Henry VII. and VIII., down to Act for the Relief of the Poor of the 43rd year of Elizabeth, when, “not as the result of a sudden thought or a single effort, but gradually framed upon the sole ground of experience,” the system of the Poor Acts was first established. But we have no desire nor time to ransack the records of the past, and I only refer to what has struck me most, namely, that during all those long years the one great difficulty in the way of abolishing or controlling vagrancy—for which remember the punishment might be even death as a felon and an enemy of the commonwealth, was alms-giving, notwithstanding that it was prohibited on forfeiture of ten times of the amount given. History repeats itself, and the indiscriminate almsgiving of to-day is one of the principal supports of vagrancy, and it is a remarkable feature that this almsgiving is by no means confined to the well-to-do folk. As an example of what I mean, I may quote from a letter written to me by Sir John Dorington, the chairman of the Gloucestershire Quarter Sessions and County Council, and an

acknowledged authority upon the question of vagrancy, who, alluding to the important railway line through the south of the county on which thousands are employed, says the railway works do not create the vagrant class, but they come to the works because the navvy is so free in his gifts to them.

For many a long day the main character of legislation was essentially that of police measures, the defence of the commonwealth against mendicancy, but by degrees the State appears to have realised that it had a civilising mission to perform towards all classes, but especially the rising generation.

Putting the past aside, we come to the Vagrants Act, 1824 (5 Geo. IV., c. 83), which is still in force, and the terms of which need not now be quoted. We may next allude to the Pauper Inmates' Discharge and Regulation Act of 1871, which requires Guardians to erect special casual wards, the Central Board being empowered to issue regulations as to diet and work, the casual not being allowed to discharge himself until the completion of the prescribed work or before eleven A.M. on the day following his admission, with an extension of the period of detention if the casual has been admitted more than twice in one month. Then follows the Casual Poor Act of 1882, by which the casual may be detained till nine o'clock on the morning of the second day following his admission.

We may now, therefore, consider what have been the results of this more modern legislation, what has been done to take advantage of it, and what outside efforts have been made to assist the end that Parliament and indeed all of us have had and have in view.

The first thing that strikes me is the absolute ignorance we are in of the statistics of the question we have to solve. What is the number? what the classification? How many *bona-fide* seekers for work? How many with their own children? How many with hired



or borrowed children? And how many children legitimate and illegitimate?

As to numbers, it would appear from the last Local Government Report (27th for 1897-98) that the mean number of vagrants relieved in England and Wales on the 1st July and 1st January for the year ending Lady Day 1898 was 11,295, or considerably more than in any of the other forty years given in the table (appendix 337) except 1897. But it also appears that this table is not prepared upon a uniform principle, some Unions returning only those vagrants relieved on the night of the day to which the return relates, while in other Unions all vagrants relieved at any time during the twenty-four hours are included, so that in some cases vagrants discharged in the morning and admitted later in the day to another Union were counted twice. A corrected return has been made since 1st January 1896, and we find that the numbers relieved on the night of that day were 7,859; on the 1st July 1896, 6,668; 1st January 1897, 6,922; 1st July 1897, 5,192; and 1st January 1898, 7,696. This last figure appears as 13,563—the number relieved at some time during the twenty-four hours—under the old system. I think, therefore, that we may conclude that the smaller number more correctly gives the real number of vagrants relieved, but in any case there is an increase rather than a decrease.

The total number of paupers of all kinds, including vagrants, relieved on the 1st January 1898, were 836,913, or 1 out of every 37 persons, or 2.7 per cent. of the population. Vagrants, therefore, relieved under Poor Law regulations figure for about 1 per cent. of the total number of paupers.

But it is scarcely necessary to add that this by no means represents the total of the class, which is estimated by some at 30,000, by others at 50,000. I lean to the opinion that even the lower estimate is high enough.

As to the children of vagrants, the only return I can find is one of the 27th August 1895, which for the five years ending 1st January of that year gives 2,895 as the total number under sixteen years of age, or an annual average of 579 relieved under the Poor Law on one particular night.

Here again estimates differ widely as to the total number of children of vagrants and of all classes alike thereto; I read in one paper of 30,000, and in another of 300,000!

As to classification, only the same indefinite results are obtained. One point, however, can be partially cleared up, and that is the proportion of discharged soldiers, for I find that a return was made to the House of Commons on the 1st August of this year, from which it appears that on the night of the 20th December 1897 there were in the casual wards in England and Wales 347 men producing certificates sufficient to substantiate their claim to be Army Reservists, discharged soldiers, and militia men, and 1,294 men unable so to substantiate their claim, in all 1,641. But beyond this I know of no positive figures.

Upon looking over the various papers read at these Conferences since 1875—a most interesting study—I find that up to 1882 the oft-repeated demand was for greater uniformity of treatment and increased power of detention, varied by the proposal of Mr Vallance, that the distinction between vagrants and ordinary paupers should be abolished, coupled with the necessity of making habitual pauperism and vagrancy penal offences. Soon after the passing of Pell's Act of 1882, giving increased power of detention, the papers upon vagrancy, as was natural, fell off, but in the early nineties they began again, showing that though scotched for a time, the difficulty was not surmounted; again greater uniformity is urged, and it is repeatedly suggested that there should be a Royal Commission to consider the whole subject. In February 1896 the

Local Government Board issued a special circular, from which I quote as follows :—

“Many representations have been made to the Board as to the desirability of increasing the powers of Guardians as regards the detention of vagrants, and of dealing with them in other ways, but the Board are of opinion that as the first step Boards of Guardians throughout the country should avail themselves of the powers they already possess, and endeavour, in concert with the Guardians of neighbouring Unions, to ensure greater uniformity of practice in dealing with this class of applicants for relief.”

The circular sets out with great fairness the whole circumstances of the question, and ends as follows :—

“If it should hereafter be found that the existing law, when duly enforced by Boards of Guardians generally throughout the country, is insufficient to meet the evil, the Board will be quite ready to consider what further action should be taken with a view to dealing with the question either by legislation or otherwise.”

I do not allude at any length to the outside schemes for extra relief organised mainly with the view of inducing the public to withhold their ill-bestowed alms, because I cannot persuade myself that they are of any real or lasting good, for the same want of uniformity prevails, with the result that the vagrant simply shifts from place to place as suits him best, and no real cure is found.

Upon the proposal that the distinction between vagrants and ordinary paupers should be abolished, a Select Committee of the House of Lords on Poor Law Relief, sitting in 1888, reported :—

“We think that paupers belonging to the vagrant and casual class, for various reasons, could not be dealt with otherwise than as a separate class, so that practically it would always be necessary to maintain a separate department of the Workhouse for their reception.”



The general inclination of people is, immediately they find a difficulty, to ask for fresh legislation, regardless of the fact that the powers, under existing legislation, have by no means been exhausted; in dealing recently, in my own county of Surrey, with the kindred subject of gipsies and tent-dwellers, this was made very clear, and it is equally so with vagrants. It may be that in carrying out uniformity of treatment to the full, certain difficulties as to incidence of cost may have to be met by alteration of or addition to existing laws, and in this respect it occurs to me that some grouping of Unions, with possibly the County Councils controlling an imperial contribution of funds *ad hoc*, might be useful. The actual cost of maintenance of vagrants at the Workhouses is not large, but the real cost, direct and indirect, to the whole community generally is such that a portion, at any rate, of the outlays upon buildings necessary for uniformity of treatment might with all fairness be made a charge upon the imperial funds.

Some vagrants, I suppose, we shall always have with us, until, as one Inspector writes, we have a square hole for every square person and a round one for every round person in the world, but it would seem possible to reduce their number, at any rate, by dealing with the children; it is by means of these children that tramps receive much relief from cottagers and others. The following paragraph appears in the last report of Mr Philip H. Bagenal, Inspector for the district of Norfolk, Suffolk, and parts of Essex and Cambridge:—

“Workhouse Masters, as a rule, think that the number of female tramps has greatly diminished of late years. I feel sure that the action of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has helped towards this desirable result. A system exists in this district by which Masters of Workhouses are able to communicate with the nearest Inspector of the Society

whenever a parent and children leave the Workhouse casual ward, indicating the route they are taking. The Inspector meets the party outside the town in which he lives, and if there is anything to show that the children have been ill-used or overwalked, he can take action accordingly."

Col. Henry Daniell, Chief Constable of Hertfordshire, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information, writes that his police force have the following standing order:—

"Where a man or woman, or both, in charge of children, are taken into custody for vagrancy, the children are to be dealt with under the provisions of—

"1. The Vagrancy Act.

"2. The Industrial Schools Act.

"3. The Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1894.

"The last-named Act is wide enough to cover nearly every form of cruelty to children. . . . Cases should always be reported to the nearest Inspector or other officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but the initial steps in the case of vagrants' children should always be taken by the police, unless an official of the Society is on the spot."

There is no doubt but that under the Canal Boats Acts, 1877-1884, much good has been done, and that the condition of the women and children is vastly different to what it was.

Here again is something that, if done uniformly and generally, may do much to remedy the evil and avoid the alternative of relieving parents altogether of their children; the honest parent is made to pay under the Industrial Schools Act: why is the vagrant to be relieved? At least he can be made to work. The ranks of this unhappy class are continually being fed by the growing up of children who have never known any other than a vagrant life, varied by a few weeks in a Workhouse.

All dealings with the vagrant class, and indeed the poor generally, would be rendered much easier if there were improved machinery for identifying and tracing the population, as indeed there must be if any Old Age Pension scheme is to be established. In 1896 a Select Committee of the House of Commons affirmed "that some provision should be made for the more accurate ascertainment, locally, of the number unemployed." To use Mr Nathaniel Cohen's words in his letter to the *Times* on this subject in August last, there must be some system "in order to identify who's who."

The paper on vagrancy, by Mr J. Whittaker, J.P. (Vice-Chairman of the Burnley Board of Guardians), read at the Central Conference in February 1895, is of the greatest interest, and there may be learnt from it, I think, amidst other reliable teaching, that too much importance may be, and is, perhaps, given to this question of vagrancy, a social sore no doubt, but one that can be kept in check especially by an improvement in the handling.

The bare necessities of life must be met, and then we must call upon the magistrates, police, and the public to co-operate in their endeavours to stem the evil, and, as is unfortunately not the case in such social movements, to sustain their efforts; spasmodic movements are worse than useless.

A passport of some kind for the honest wayfarer is almost a necessity. And I do not appreciate the feeling that the requirement of evidence of *bona-fides* should be resented by the genuine and honest searcher for work who asks in the meantime to be kept at the public expense. With all the new parochial machinery, labour bureaus, &c., some scheme for workmen's tickets should be feasible.

While insisting upon the necessity of a general uniformity of treatment, I should give the Master of the Workhouse free hands in dealing with individuals, so that with reasonable evidence that he is a real seeker



for work, the traveller should be put on his way speedily and without the utmost rigor of the law ; the power of detention of mere vagrants should be extended, and especially so when accompanied by children, for whose protection and relief from a vagrant life no efforts, public or private, can be too great.

In conclusion, let us all in our respective spheres of life do what we can to utilise existing laws to the full, knowing full well that when the powers thus given us are really exhausted Parliament will not hesitate to further aid all thorough, humane, corrective efforts, to diminish this social evil of vagrancy.

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### DISCUSSION.

MR CHANCE (Hon. Sec.) said they must all thank Mr Halsey for his extremely able paper, which also had the merit of being very short. The system of separation of casuals had reduced pauperism very considerably ; but those vagrants who would not go to the Unions where that system was in force must go somewhere else, and they must frequent the Unions where the law was not enforced as it should be. If they did not acknowledge the vagrant it would go far to remove the evil. At present special buildings were provided, and the vagrant was led to think he was different from ordinary paupers. If they did away with the distinction, the law of removal would have to be abolished. It was a most iniquitous law, and it was passed in a most immoral reign,—that of Charles II.—and it would be a good thing to repeal it altogether. In 1882, a Bill which was introduced in the House of Commons proposed that vagrants should be treated as ordinary paupers, and for those (he was not one of them) who wished to abolish the House of Lords, this would be another nail in its coffin, for the clause was rejected by the House of Lords. If vagrants were treated as ordinary paupers, the Guardians would be able to get hold of the children, and to insist on the parents doing something towards their maintenance. Mr Vallance, Mr Albert Pell, and other authorities were of the same opinion. The vagrants would then be able to be classified, and the respectable working men in search of work could be allowed to continue their journey without detention. Guardians might go on for years trying to abolish vagrancy, but until they get rid of the name, they will not get rid of the thing.

MR ADAM STIGANT (Medway) said that having been associated with that Union for thirty years he had given the question of vagrancy considerable attention. He had discussed the question many times

at those Conferences, and was sorry to come to the conclusion that it was all to no purpose since successive Governments seemed indisposed to do anything to remedy the evil. Legislation of late years had tended rather to make vagrancy an established institution, much to the public prejudice. Unions had had to be made more comfortable, and a chain of convenient hostelrys extended throughout the land. It might be that a draconic law was required, and the Continental method of distinguishing between the *bona-fide* seeker of work and the worthless tramp, and committing the latter to the State Workhouse, might be adopted. In those institutions the tramp was taught a trade to enable him to get an honest living. There should also be a law enabling Guardians to exercise control over the children, alike in the interests of the children and of the State. In England regard was rightly had to the principle of individual liberty, but a mistaken application of the principle must not prevent the authorities from dealing with the thousands of people who prowled about the country.

Mr F. W. DIMBLEBY (Richmond) said that what was needed was uniformity of administration. At present the law gave Guardians the power to do a great many things, but did not compel them to do them. The detention of tramps until nine o'clock on the morning of the second day was one of those things, and it should be made compulsory. Another thing that the Local Government Board should see to was that all Boards of Guardians provided adequate accommodation for vagrants. In some Unions the accommodation was insufficient, and the tramps were placed in other departments of the Workhouse, where life was too comfortable for them. It appeared to him that life was already too pleasant for the professional tramp, and that if Mr Chance's suggestion to abolish the distinction between tramps and ordinary paupers was adopted life would be still easier for the tramp. Neither could he agree with Mr Chance that by abolishing the name they would abolish the thing. A tramp by any other name would smell as evil. Lastly, that abolition of the law of settlement would tend to bring the worthless portion of the population to those Unions where they were most leniently treated. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JESSE HAWKES (Malling) said that he was not quite in sympathy with those who thought that the practical elimination of vagrancy was impossible. It might be an enormously expensive process, especially at first, but in the end it would be most economical. If a man had so strong a dislike for work that he thought he ought to live on the community, that was "moral lunacy," and should be regarded as quite as dangerous as "mental lunacy"; and should be met by the deprivation of liberty of the persons so affected, especially if parents of families. His Board recently passed a resolution in favour of the detention of adult vagrants, and it should be done at the expense of the county. A common centre should be provided, and the tramp would soon be sifted into two or three



classes, those able and willing to work, but unable to get employment; those able, but not willing; and some neither able nor willing to work. The first might by judicious treatment be in time restored to their families; the second should not be allowed to go forth to increase the public burdens; the third should be permanently detained. Guardians had to grasp the nettle. As soon as the Legislature would allow them to deal with the problem they would eliminate vagrancy, for there would be no excuse for begging.

Mr H. G. WILLINK (Bradfield) said he would not trouble the Conference with many remarks coming from a Union where they had hardly any vagrants at all. One of the causes of vagrancy was indiscriminate alms-giving. He thought that under the Casual Poor Regulation Orders the practice of many Boards had been not to act upon orders for admission to the casual ward after, say, nine o'clock in the evening. That might have little effect in the country, but in the towns begging went on much later, and it was not an uncommon ground of begging that a person could not get into the casual ward after a certain hour. Perhaps Guardians would allow the officials to admit tramps at any hour. It was true it would be inconvenient to officials, and one had to consider officials to a certain extent, but the suggested admission at any hour might remove one more excuse for assailing the charitable public. He made that suggestion on the authority of Mr Morton Latham, the late Chairman of the Edmonton Board, who was of opinion that the change would be beneficial. Any suggestion of the establishment of labour colonies would have to be exhaustively considered before any decision could be arrived at. He visited the labour colonies in Holland some years ago, and though exceptionally stringent laws against begging kept people out of the streets they did not prevent beggars from being sent to the labour colonies again and again, and the system was expensive and not looked upon with any great favour. (Hear, hear.)

Miss LONSDALE (Lichfield) said that a great deal of good might be done by giving Masters directions to keep apparently respectable tramps in the Workhouse, of course if they were willing to stop for a few days in order that inquiries might be made about them. The results were small, but they were well worth having. The Matron recently requested her to see a girl who was on tramp. She talked to the girl and learned that the girl had been in service in London, and earning £25 a year, but had wandered 120 miles merely because she had got out of heart. That girl was now doing well. (Cheers.) Recently, too, she was impressed by something in the face of a man who was just leaving the tramp ward, and made inquiries about him. She was happy to say he, too, was now in a good position as attendant in an inebriate home. (Hear, hear.) In that way they might weed out the tramps, and the younger ones, especially boys, who took to the road for the mere sake of adventure, should be detained and dealt with. (Cheers.)

Mr B. G. BERRY (Faversham) said he would be glad of any in-



formation from Mr Halsey as to how he dealt with the gipsies and others of that class. Van-dwellers were very much in evidence in East Kent, and inconveniently near his fruit plantations. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) He would like to speak about the children in the Workhouses——

The President ruled this out of order.

Miss CARTWRIGHT (St George's-in-the-East) said that the number of women casuals had greatly increased since the recent order of the Local Government Board, that every child was to receive a pint of milk.

Mr DUNCAN MILLIGAN (Wandsworth and Clapham) said he would like to accentuate the fact that they were face to face with a large increase of vagrancy, largely owing to the various regulations which had tended to make Workhouses more comfortable. He was glad to find a consensus of opinion at that meeting, for a passport of some kind should be given for the honest wayfarer, and that there should be uniformity of administration. There was a system of telegraphy between tramps by which they got to know which were the "best" Unions, and what days were skilly days, and soup days, and so forth. With regard to the Union he had the honour of representing that day, they did not interpret the regulations harshly, and they suffered for it, for the casuals halted there rather than go on to Mr Dimbleby's district. But that was an argument for uniformity, because if all the Unions treated the paupers alike, each Union would get its fair proportion of inmates and no more. The kind treatment that many of the tramps received only served to widen the breach and cause them to leave independence behind them for ever. (Hear, hear.)

Miss STACEY (King's Norton) said it had been urged that the only way to diminish vagrancy was to keep tramps for two nights and make them work according to the last Vagrancy Act. However, they must have sufficient accommodation and a sufficient number of cells. She came from the King's Norton Union where the vagrants had been doubling during the last five years; and in the last few months they had been obliged to sleep two men in one cell. King's Norton was a suburb of Birmingham, partly rural and partly urban, and the tramps were so seriously on the increase that the Board had determined to spend £3,000 on building tramp wards for men (there were very few women or children). But if the expected happened and the newly adopted system was successful, they would have no tramps to house after the system had been a few months in operation, and a large amount of money would have been spent on empty buildings.

Mr GOSSET (Kingston-on-Thames) said that as Vice-Chairman of a Union which suffered very severely from this evil, he came there in the hope of hearing a remedy, but had heard nothing of a practicable kind. His Board had tried the severe system, and still the numbers increased. They were hampered by the regulations of the Local Government Board. To give liberty to adult able-bodied

paupers simply meant that they would leave their children in the Guardians' care for ever. (Hear hear.)

Colonel SPARKS (Richmond) said that although on almost every point connected with the Poor Law he was willing to sit at the feet of Mr Vallance, he could not agree with him as to putting the vagrant and the ordinary paupers on the same footing. He knew persons who had been ordinary paupers, but who were now independent and respectable, but tramps, with one exception, he never knew to reform, for, as they had often assured him, the life was a very attractive one, how he could not see. They had provided splendid accommodation under the cellular system at Richmond, but it had made no perceptible difference to the vagrancy there. The tramps should be sent to a penal settlement and forced to work in some way, and every man should be compelled to carry a certificate of identification. He did not agree with Mr Chance as to the abolition of the law of settlement. They had in his Union a woman who had been in the Workhouse forty years, and had cost the rate-payers over £1,200. Would it have been fair that the Union should have been called on to spend that sum if the woman had happened as a stranger to become chargeable to the Union?

Mr J. CLAMP (Master of the Bradfield Union Workhouse) said the existing system of admitting tramps was objectionable on many grounds; one apparently respectable man bitterly complained of having to strip in the presence of a lot of strangers before being allowed to retire for the night. Tramps must be closely supervised, and this should be done by paid officials. Wherever possible they should have two porters, as the work was a severe tax on one man. He wished to say that a kindly word from the Guardians greatly encouraged the officials who had to discharge the trying duties of the casual ward.

Miss BRODIE HALL (Eastbourne), speaking principally to the country Guardians, said that at the Conference at Lewes a few years ago there was absolute unanimity on this point, that one important remedial measure for vagrancy would be uniformity of treatment in all the Unions in the kingdom. Guardians present that day should all go home and try and get uniformity in the various districts. The tramp's life was, as Colonel Sparks had stated, regarded by them as an attractive one, and some time ago she was talking to a woman who informed her that, with her husband, she was in the habit of tramping along the coast from Folkestone to Brighton and returning by the inland route. That woman scorned the notion of having a roof over her head.

Mr J. O'CONNOR (Stepney) said it was the same old story, beating the same old dead horse, the vagrant. For years there had been the same sort of complaints, but not a single sound suggestion for preventing the formation of vagrants at all. As a working man he had no sympathy with tramps. The short service system manufactured tramps by the hundred, and after the deferred pay was spent on



"booze," the men took to the road. The law was sufficiently strong to deal with the wilfully unemployed, and it was only want of system and want of determination on the part of those who had to put it in force that prevented the law from being effectual. He would not advise Guardians to employ more officials; they were more expense than the tramps. He would also remind Mr Clamp that if there were no tramps there would be no officials, and then the officials would go on tramp perhaps, and may not be so ready to condemn others. (Laughter.) The tramp was a greater enemy to the working man than to those who grumbled most loudly about him. (Hear, hear.)

Mr W. CROOKS (Poplar) said he objected to tramps, rich and poor, especially rich. The greatest enemy of the working man was the tramp. In this time of industrial peace, the masters were denouncing tramps as bad men in the casual wards, who won't work; but when a wages dispute arose the masters pointed to the tramp and told their employés, "There are plenty of better men than you to be had any day." Vagrant parents should be deprived of the custody of their children. The police should be entrusted with the control of tramps, and it would be the best policy for the nation in the long run.

Miss CLIFFORD (Bristol) said that if the children of the tramps were taken, their maintenance would have to be a county or a national charge, because under the present law of settlement no Board of Guardians would consent to keep such children. She would be glad if a morning's discussion at some future Conference could be devoted to "a consideration of the best way of getting hold of the parents."

Rev. Canon PHILLIPS (Epsom) said that the tramp question had been before the public for many years, and there was as many tramps as ever. They should be placed under police supervision, and the children should be taken from them and not allowed to grow into thieves, idlers, and vagabonds, for once a tramp always a tramp. He would be glad to see the law of settlement abrogated.

Mr HALSEY, replying on the discussion, said that they all agreed as to the need for uniformity as to "grasping the nettle" and that sort of thing, but Parliament would not grant them more power until they had fully utilised the powers they already possessed.

A vote of thanks having been passed to Mr Halsey, the Conference adjourned for lunch.

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In the afternoon the first business was the election of the Committee.

The three members (one for London and two for the country) to serve on the Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences were re-elected, viz., Mr H. G. Willink, the Rev. C. E. Few, and Mr Duncan Milligan.

The members of Committee of Management for 1898-99, for Sussex, Surrey, Berks, and Hants were re-elected; but there was a



contest for the representation of London between four members, the voting (which, as in the case of the other districts represented on the Committee, was confined to the members of the particular district) being—Mr James O'Connor (Stepney), seven votes ; Mr W. Crooks (Poplar), seven votes ; and Mr Vallance (Whitechapel), six votes, the unsuccessful candidate, Mr W. Brown (Lewisham), getting four votes in the final count.

The members appointed for Kent were :—Rev. C. E. Few (re-elected), and, in place of General Shaw-Kemball and Mr Stigant, resigned, Mr Jesse Hawkes (Maidstone), and Mr W. J. Mitchell (Faversham.)

Dr SHUTTLEWORTH then read the following paper :—

## POOR LAW PROVISION FOR THE MENTALLY DEFICIENT CLASS.

BY DR G. E. SHUTTLEWORTH,

*Late Medical Superintendent, Royal Albert Asylum for Idiots and Imbeciles of the Northern Counties, Lancaster ; Medical Examiner of Defective Children, School Board for London.*

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SOME apology is needed for again drawing attention to a subject which has already, in one form and another, been brought before the notice of this Conference, and of other Poor Law Conferences in various districts of England and Wales. My excuse must be that, although there has been much talk, comparatively little has been done, and in such circumstances it may not be amiss to act upon the homely maxim, “Keep pegging away.” It is almost ancient history to refer to the Report—now twenty-two years old—of the Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society, which, after an exhaustive inquiry, recommended with regard to pauper idiots, imbeciles, and harmless lunatics, “that the country should be divided into districts, each sufficiently large to fill an asylum containing not more than 2,000 adults, and schools containing, at the utmost, 500 young people.” This somewhat vague recommendation of a voluntary committee, which devoted close and prolonged attention to the subject of inquiry, was in effect adopted

by the Royal Commission (Lord Egerton of Tatton's) "on the blind, the deaf and dumb, &c." (the *etcetera* including imbeciles), who reported that "there should be, for every group of counties, an institution similar in character to Darenth, divided into two sections, one of which should be confined wholly to educable imbeciles, where the children of those parents who are either paupers or cannot afford to pay for the maintenance of their children in an institution, could be sent by the Guardians or School Authority" (Report, p. 693).

The date of this Report is 1889; and what progress, we may ask, has been made in carrying out the recommendation, in this respect, of the Commission? So far as combination of counties is concerned, none whatever; though by clauses 241 and 242 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, *permissive* power is given to local authorities to "provide separate asylums for idiots"; and "to unite in providing and maintaining a district asylum with any other local authority or local authorities." Although in the metropolitan district a comprehensive arrangement had been in force since 1870 (under the Act 30 Vic., c. 6) for the education and care of pauper idiots, imbeciles, and harmless lunatics, it was not until 1888\* that separate accommodation was provided for idiot children by any provincial asylum authority, that being the date of the opening of the idiot children's block in connection with the Northampton County Asylum at Berrywood. This block, constructed for 50 mentally defective boys and girls, has been constantly full, and is at the present time overflowing. The county of Hants opened in 1897 a block for 50 idiot children, in connection with their lunatic asylum; and more recently the Lancashire Asylums Board has utilised Winwick

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\* For a time, at an earlier date, a separate ward for idiot children was provided at the Warwick County Asylum, but was soon absorbed into general use.

Hall (the mansion on the estate near Warrington, on which they are building their fifth county asylum) for the accommodation of 50 idiot boys. At Birmingham a ward has recently been set apart in Rubery Hill Asylum for idiot boys, and is favourably noticed in the Lunacy Commissioners' last Report. But the most extensive separate arrangement for idiots and imbeciles in connection with a lunatic asylum is the annex at the Wandsworth Asylum for the county of Middlesex. Here a new building, justly described by the Lunacy Commissioners as "very handsome and commodious," has been erected for 202 patients of the imbecile class, and excellent arrangements have been made for the training (both educational and industrial) of the younger inmates. Outside the metropolitan district, therefore, the Poor Law authorities seem to have specially provided for less than 400 imbeciles and idiots, as distinguished from the ordinary insane. The majority of those so provided for are of the juvenile class; and the lack of Poor Law accommodation in the counties outside London as compared with the metropolitan district may be seen, in a rough and ready way, by contrasting the provision for 1,000 at Darenth Schools\* drawn from the London population of four and a half million, with that of 400 for the rest of the country, with almost six times the population of the county of London!

I may perhaps be permitted to enter a little more into detail as to this statistical aspect of the question. The recent Annual Report of the Local Government

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\* By the courtesy of Dr F. Taylor, the Medical Superintendent of Darenth, I have (since writing the above) received more recent information than was previously available. It seems that hopeless and helpless cases are now, as far as possible, kept in the "pavilions," quite apart from the educable children in the "schools" proper; and that amongst the 1,000 inmates of both divisions are included a considerable number over sixteen years of age. Having regard, however, to the demand for admission of juvenile cases, I have not deemed it necessary to alter my basis of calculation.



Board estimates the population of England and Wales at 31,055,355, of whom 836,193 are paupers. The population of the county of London on the 1st of January 1898 is stated as 4,463,169, of whom 123,140 are paupers. In England and Wales the ratio of paupers is 26.9 to 10,000 of the population; in London the ratio is 27.6 to 10,000. Assuming that the prevalence of congenital mental defect is not greater in the metropolitan than in the provincial districts—and it has been maintained by Dr Clouston and other competent authorities that imbecility is the characteristic of rural communities, insanity of urban—and that the number of pauper idiots and imbeciles bears in each case a similar ratio to the pauper population generally, we may conclude that on the London scale the rest of the country would require to provide for pauper imbeciles, idiots, and harmless lunatics about 5.8 times the amount of accommodation provided by the Metropolitan Asylums Board at Darenth, Caterham, and Leavesden. Those three institutions provide in round figures an aggregate of 6,000 beds. For the rest of England and Wales, therefore, something like 34,800 places for imbeciles, &c., of all ages, would be required. We have seen that, so far as juvenile imbeciles are concerned, specific accommodation has been provided by the county authorities for about 400, whereas if the Darenth Schools be taken as a standard for the general requirements, there should be provision for 5,800. Not to be unjust to the provincial authorities, we must, however, add to this, 400 places which the managers of certain voluntary institutions for idiots put at the disposal of Guardians. The Western Counties Asylum at Starcross found room, amongst other patients, on the 1st of January 1898, for 235 paupers; the Eastern Counties Asylum at Colchester, for 40; the Royal Albert Asylum, at Lancaster, for 171—an aggregate of 446, so that the total pauper provision for juvenile imbeciles is in this way

increased to 846, and the deficiency on the estimated requirements for this class to something under 5,000. But it must be remembered that the accommodation now afforded by the voluntary institutions is not to be relied on as permanent, at any rate in the case of the two last named. As regards adult idiots, imbeciles, and harmless lunatics, it may be said that there is no distinctive accommodation for such outside the metropolitan district. Of course they are specially classified in the existing county asylums, when not retained in workhouses, but it is a question if the latter is a convenient, or the former an economical, arrangement.

In these speculations I do not wish to ignore the fact that in 1894 the Lunacy Commissioners and the Local Government Board obtained, respectively, returns as to the number of pauper idiot, imbecile, and epileptic children under sixteen in asylums and in workhouses throughout England and Wales (not of course including Darenth, Leavesden, and Caterham), and that the aggregate number returned was no more than 1,010, of whom 93 were said to be epileptic only. But the returns give no information of the large number of children living with poor parents, who receive, in consequence, some parochial relief, not to say anything of those numerous cases who are kept in the background, or not acknowledged as imbecile even in the lower stratum of society.

The experience of Darenth conclusively shows how, before institution accommodation is provided, the estimate is apt to lag behind the real number of such cases. In 1873, about a hundred children were separated from the adult imbeciles in the metropolitan asylums, and it was estimated by the managers that a school building for from three to four hundred children would suffice for the needs of the metropolis. Darenth Schools (so called) were ultimately planned for 500, but have

repeatedly had to be enlarged, and on the 1st January 1898 contained no less than 974 inmates.

Turning now from figures to considerations of policy, it seems hardly necessary at this time of day to argue that imbecile children are out of place both in Workhouses and in asylums for the insane. In Workhouses they do not fit into the system of classification; and in lunatic asylums they receive positive harm, physically, mentally, and morally, if in contact with the adult insane. In the few county asylums where separate provision is made for them, they are indeed better off; but I doubt whether under the *régime* which must obtain in an institution primarily intended for the insane, the educable imbecile child is as favourably placed as in a training school exclusively organised for the mentally deficient class. There is always a tendency for the "weaker to go to the wall," and there is certainly one instance of a division of a county asylum originally devoted to imbecile children having been crushed out of existence by the pressure for admission of ordinary lunatics.

To avoid confusion, it may be well to state that in my view idiots and imbeciles are divisible for practical purposes into four categories, viz. :—

1. Juveniles capable of some educational and industrial training.
2. Juveniles requiring merely custodial care.
3. Adults capable of useful employment.
4. Adults requiring merely custodial care.

The question naturally follows, What combination of these several classes is advisable for Poor Law administrative purposes, and which, if any, may suitably be treated in the ordinary lunatic asylums?

At the first blush the most reasonable arrangement would seem to be to classify the juveniles in one institution (or division of an institution), and all the adults in another, on the plan adopted at Darenth. But experience shows that such a plan as regards the juveniles is not unexceptionable. The tendency at



Darenth Schools has been to the accumulation of hopeless and helpless cases, so that the number of educable cases is only about one-third of the total number of children resident in the schools. The atmosphere is consequently depressing and not favourable to the mental development of those who may be termed improvable; and it is now in contemplation—and the Local Government Board has signified its approval to such a course—to remove the educable cases to an entirely separate establishment run on school lines. It would seem, therefore, necessary in any Poor Law arrangement for imbecile children to insist absolutely on the separation of the educable from the non-educable portion. At the same time care must be taken not to write down children as non-educable without sufficient trial, for occasionally improvement does occur, especially at an early age, in cases that at first look very unpromising. Probation in the school establishment should therefore be had recourse to for a period in every case not obviously hopeless. The school, it must be remembered, is to be a place for manual and industrial\* training quite as much as (if not more than) for the acquisition of the “three R’s.” We have therefore two distinct classes of juveniles to provide for; and the custodial branch will have to be at least twice as large as the educational. If the numbers aggregated in one centre are sufficiently large, there is a distinct advantage in the educational branch being at some distance from the custodial, and there is little objection to the latter being a detached block in connection with a lunatic asylum. With regard to adults capable of useful employment, I would remark that some of these—more especially those trained in the school—may with advantage be retained in the educational department beyond the statutory age

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\* See paper by author on the “Industrial Training of Imbeciles,” *Journal of Mental Science*, July 1898, p. 531.

of sixteen. Adult imbeciles, requiring merely care, are of course well off in the county asylum, under good classification; though a separate establishment of cheaper character might suffice for these in localities where their numbers would render such a course economical.

Probably the most ideal scheme is an imitation throughout the country of the plan pursued in the metropolitan area, avoiding its ascertained defects. But this could be only accomplished, except in Lancashire and Yorkshire, by a combination of county authorities, which experience shows is very difficult to bring about, having been attempted in vain for some of the south-eastern counties, and being now agitated, with dubious prospects, for the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford. The London scale of provision for imbeciles (6,000 beds to 123,140 paupers) gives a ratio of 48 beds to each 1,000 of the pauper population, and on this scale Lancashire would have to provide for about 4,000 imbeciles, of whom some 600 would be juveniles, and Yorkshire (West Riding) for over 2,000. Even in Lancashire the number of *educable* pauper imbecile children would probably not exceed 200, and less than this number could not economically be dealt with in a separate school establishment.

As a general rule, indeed, it may be stated that, in order to organise a special institution for juvenile imbeciles, it will require a pauper population of at least 60,000 to furnish 500 children (educable and non-educable), and probably less than this number would not justify Poor Law authorities in embarking upon the necessarily heavy establishment expenses. A combination of Surrey, Kent, Essex, and Sussex (such as was proposed some years ago), furnishing a pauper population of over 80,000, would satisfactorily fulfil the conditions named above.

I have laid stress on the provision for juvenile

idiots and imbeciles (as distinguished from adults), as it is with regard to the former class that there is a universal consensus of opinion from Lunacy Commissioners, Medical Superintendents, and Poor Law Guardians, that they are out of place in the wards of asylums for the insane. With respect to adult imbeciles, I regard the matter as one of classification merely, which can be arranged as can be most economically managed in each locality, either in connection with, or apart from, the county or borough asylum.

So far I have considered only the action incumbent on County Councils and Asylum Committees. It must not be forgotten, however, that Boards of Guardians have much in their own hands in this matter. As a concrete example I may refer to what has actually been done in the North of England. The great Unions of Manchester and of Chorlton have, on the instigation of Dr J. M. Rhodes (who has devoted much intelligent attention to the treatment of imbeciles), combined to establish a colony for 1,500 epileptics and imbeciles now accommodated in their Workhouses. A site has been secured, and if this be approved by the Local Government Board, cottages will be erected on the Alt-Scherbitz plan, to accommodate groups of fifty patients, with central administrative offices, infirmary, &c. A similar combination of Unions to establish a school for pauper imbecile children has been suggested by the Birmingham Guardians, but so far without success. Of course such institutions are necessarily regarded by the Local Government Board as Workhouse extensions, but Darenth Asylum has all along been technically a Workhouse.

The *rôle* of the voluntary institutions, such as those at Earlswood, Lancaster, Colchester, Starcross, and Knowle (affording, in the aggregate, accommodation to some 1,700 patients), must not be lost sight of, for



even those that do not profess to admit paupers, no doubt do something to diminish the demand in their districts for pauper accommodation. It is, indeed, where there is no such charitable provision, or a totally inadequate one (as in the Midland Counties), that the urgency for Poor Law provision for imbeciles is greatest. It must, moreover, be remembered that as a rule these voluntary institutions retain their patients only for a term of years, and the life-long care which most of them require ought to be provided by the Poor Law authorities. But contracts between Guardians and managers of voluntary institutions are a most valuable temporary expedient, and possibly the utility of the latter as educational institutions might be extended by the judicious selection of a certain proportion of pauper patients.

Time forbids my doing more than glancing at the large question of provision for the mentally feeble (as distinguished from the imbecile) class. It must suffice to say that in the present experimental stage of the subject it may be wiser for Guardians to avail themselves of the voluntary Homes which have been established in various parts of the country by charitable effort, the weekly rates of payment for an inmate varying from 5s. to 7s. per week. A confederation of existing Homes (which are usually for not more than twenty inmates) has been formed, and full particulars may be obtained from the National Society for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded, 53 Victoria Street, S.W.

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#### DISCUSSION.

Dr J. MILSON RHODES (Chorlton), who was cordially greeted on rising, said that in the County Palatine they said that "what Lancashire thinks to-day, England says to-morrow." They regarded his old friend Dr Shuttleworth as the greatest authority on the subject in England, and those present would agree that they had never listened to a more able and practical paper. (Cheers.) This was a burning question, for it is an appalling fact that there were over

100,000 certified lunatics in this country, and, whereas in 1888, 69 per cent. of pauper lunatics were in asylums, now there were 75 per cent., and out of the 102,000 lunatics in England, about 94,000 were in the care of Guardians. The time was coming when the Workhouse would be looked upon as not at all a fit place for the insane. (Hear, hear.) The Chorlton and Manchester Board of Guardians had combined to provide special accommodation for the afflicted classes, and if they wished to see a first-class home in this country at the present time, let them look at the Mirthlees Home, near Perth. It was not only the best but the cheapest plan to compulsorily detain certain mentally defective persons, preventing, as it did, the increase of that partial strain on the community. (Cheers.)

Canon SLATTER (Bradfield) said that the late Mr Bland Garland had looked forward to the conversion of some of the existing Workhouses into institutions solely for the treatment of defective persons. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BRAVINGTON (Chertsey) said that at present certain troublesome children were sent to the Guardians and by them to the asylum, and nothing was done to develop what little intelligence a child sometimes possessed. (Hear, hear.)

Dr FLETCHER BEACH (late of Darenth Asylum, Kent) cordially endorsed the views in the paper. One great thing was to give the epileptic and other patients something to do; and another was to provide custodial treatment in special institutions for those cases subsequent to the fifteenth or sixteenth year. (Hear, hear.)

Miss STACEY (King's Norton) said that first as a Guardian, and secondly as secretary to one of the voluntary homes for befriending the feeble-minded, she greatly appreciated the paper. The question had been often raised at the West Midland Conference at Malvern, and she was very glad that at last Manchester and Chorlton and the four northern counties had shown other bodies how they might co-operate for the treatment of this pressing problem. The nearer they approached to careful family treatment of these cases the more successful they would be in effecting, if not cures, at least, the improvement of the sufferers. (Hear, hear.)

Dr TAYLOR (Darenth Asylum) said the evil was a widespread one. It was highly essential to provide special treatment for the epileptic who was often rational for many months, but could not be trusted at other times. He did not place much reliance on voluntary colonies, as there would be no power to detain such patients against their will. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CROOKS (Poplar) pleaded for the separation of weak-minded children from the adults, and that there should be State control over these matters, and Guardians must be entrusted with the necessary powers of dealing with the afflicted in a proper manner. (Hear, hear.)

Colonel SPARKS (Richmond) said they would be helpless without



further legislation, but the action of Chorlton and Manchester could not fail to be a most valuable precedent. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BROWN (Lewisham) said that the younger people in their charge might be divided into two great classes : first, those capable of being educated ; secondly, those who merely required custodial care. It often took a long while to find out whether a patient was educable, but it was well worth the trouble, and the Asylums Board to which he belonged did not shirk their duty in that respect. (Cheers.)

Dr SHUTTLEWORTH, replying on the discussion, said that he fully agreed with what had fallen from Dr Taylor and Mr Brown as to the desirability of having, wherever practicable, a distinct classification of imbecile children, whose improvability was doubtful, apart, on the one hand from the hopeless cases, and on the other, from those clearly educable. From this probationary class, children would be drafted to one or other department, as experience might render necessary. With regard to the extension of school age beyond the age of sixteen, he was convinced that this was most desirable, inasmuch as many imbecile children were slow, not only in mental, but also in physical development. To all intents and purposes imbeciles of sixteen often had not the maturity of an ordinary child of twelve, and it was absurd to treat them as adult imbeciles and terminate educational processes at that age. He had seen cases at twenty not unfit for the schoolroom. With regard to the requirement of the Local Government Board (mentioned by Mr Brown) that the children of feeble mind, taken over by the Metropolitan Asylums Board, should not live absolutely apart from ordinary children, he thought that there was some reason in such requirement ; and at the " Kensington and Chelsea District Schools " at Banstead the feeble-minded children, who had a class for special instruction in school, were distributed in the Cottage Homes with normal children, and (he was informed) with good effect. Replying to Colonel Sparks, he said he was not lawyer enough to say whether Boards of Guardians were included among the " Local Authorities " empowered by the Lunacy Act to establish institutions for idiots ; but it was evident from what had been done in Lancashire that there was no opposition on the part of the Local Government Board to their combining to form a colony for imbeciles and epileptics. In answer to Miss Stacey, he said that the figures in his paper related solely to idiots and imbeciles certified as such, and did not include the so-called " feeble-minded " class whose mental feebleness rendered it necessary in many cases to provide both employment and protection. He had recently seen the admirable work done in Miss Stacey's Homes of Industry near Birmingham, where each girl, on an average, was earning two-and-sixpence a week towards her maintenance—in the one home rescued from, and in the other protected from, the immorality so often the result of feeble-mindedness. While there were occasional cases of moral obliquity, in which power of detention might be useful, as a rule the girls were



so content with their surroundings at these and similar homes, that they rarely evinced any desire to discharge themselves from kind and tactful care. (Cheers.)

The proceedings were then adjourned, the customary votes of thanks having been warmly accorded.

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FRIDAY, 9TH DECEMBER.

At the morning meeting Mr BAILWARD read the following paper:—

ARE WORKHOUSES MADE UNDULY  
ATTRACTIVE?

BY W. A. BAILWARD, ESQ.,

*Late Chairman of the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians.*

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IN considering this question I should like first to point out that emphasis must be laid upon the word “attractive.” I suppose that we are all agreed that we do not wish to see those who could by their own exertions, or by those of their relations and friends, provide for sickness and old age, “attracted” into the Workhouse, or “attracted” to receive any form of parochial relief whatever. We should all, I take it, prefer to see the labouring classes supporting themselves out of their wages.

To say that we do not wish to see Workhouses made “attractive,” is not to say that we wish to see their inmates treated with any want of humanity, to see them ill-fed, badly clothed, or governed with unnecessary rigour. On the contrary, we welcome the improvements that have been made of late years in the treatment of certain classes of the inmates of Poor Law institutions, notably in that of the aged and infirm and the young. At the same time I believe that improvements can be made without necessarily rendering a Workhouse “unduly attractive” to those whom we do not wish to attract. The reluctance to enter

any institution, be it Workhouse or Almshouse, Infirmary or Hospital, is of itself a powerful safeguard, so far at least as the average of the labouring classes is concerned.

There are, however, some signs that this reluctance is gradually becoming less strong. The very considerable increase in indoor pauperism which has taken place in the last few years, and to which reference will be made presently, is one of them. Again, there are hints from time to time in the press and elsewhere that some Boards of Guardians are interpreting the circulars concerning Workhouse management, issued by the Local Government Board in 1895-96, very liberally, and possibly in a different sense from that in which they were meant to be interpreted. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the subject is a fit and proper one for discussion by a conference such as this.

The problem of keeping the balance between a too strict administration, and the rendering life in a Workhouse more "eligible" than that of the poor labourer outside, is a subtle one, and one which Boards of Guardians must solve for themselves. The most important point is that they should realise the difficulty and watch the result of their policy whatever it may be.

I am of course quite unqualified to give any answer to the question at the head of this paper. It is impossible for any single individual, apart possibly from an Inspector of the Local Government Board, to have sufficiently comprehensive knowledge upon the subject to enable him to give any opinion worth having. Moreover, I take it, that the object of papers such as this, is to raise subjects for discussion rather than to air individual opinions, which may be of very slight value.

The knowledge I have of Workhouses and their inmates is to some extent drawn from my own experi-

ence, which extends over a period of seven years, during which I have taken my part in the management of Poor Law institutions containing between two and three thousand inmates. I believe, however, that the questions that arise, and the people that have to be dealt with in all Metropolitan Workhouses, are very similar, and that the experience of one Metropolitan Guardian is very much the experience of another. My sole object will be to raise points of common interest, and to avoid as far as possible the discussion of the action of this or that Board of Guardians.

The question of Workhouse management has been very much to the fore of late years. We have had two circulars at least from the Upper Board upon the subject—one in January 1895, the other in July 1896. The first is general, and suggests various improvements in Workhouse and Infirmary such as classification, improvements in nursing, and various details, such as the abolition of distinctive clothing and other minor relaxations. The second deals chiefly with the treatment of the aged and infirm, for whom it prescribes classification as especially important, and reiterates the suggestions made in the former circular as to leave of absence and non-distinctive clothing. The circulars are only a reflection of what had been taking place in many parts of London prior to their issue. I think that we abolished distinctive clothing in my own parish at least a year before we received the circulars, and I expect that other Boards had done the same. Altogether no doubt the tendency of the last few years has been in the direction of greater indulgence for certain classes of the inmates of workhouses. With this, so long as it is rightly applied, none of us will quarrel.

It has been said that one reason for the discussion of the question here to-day is the increase of indoor pauperism. The figures are as follows :—



## LONDON.

		Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.
Jan. 1, 1893	-	63,473	51,076	114,551*
Jan. 1, 1898	-	69,488	53,724	123,140
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		+ 6,015	+ 2,648	+ 8,609*

## ENGLAND AND WALES.

		Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.
Jan. 1, 1893	-	206,727	576,870	783,597*
Jan. 1, 1898	-	231,788	605,125	836,913
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		+ 25,061	+ 28,255	+ 53,316

Thus there is an increase of 6,000 in the indoor poor of London, of 25,000 in those of England and Wales. It is not, it will be observed, accompanied by a decrease of outdoor relief. It must be remembered also that the last few years have been years of great prosperity. The figures are not encouraging to those who wish to see the tide setting in the direction of the greater independence of the labouring classes.

The Local Government Board in its second circular lays especial stress upon the importance of classification of the aged and infirm, and of separating those who have previously "led moral and respectable lives from those who, from their habits of speech, or for other reasons, are likely to cause them discomfort." It would be interesting to know how far this classification has been carried out. From the inquiries I have been able to make, I fancy in very few instances. We know, indeed, that a proper separation would involve the rebuilding of at least half the Workhouses in London. Most of them are already overcrowded, and want of space prevents any modification of existing arrangements. But even supposing there

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\* The slight discrepancies in the totals are due to the fact that a few received both indoor and outdoor relief, but their numbers are very small.

were room, the difficulties of classification are not surmounted. As I once heard it put, "How are we to decide who shall be placed in the back row of the stalls, and who shall be in the front row of the pit?" I doubt, however, whether many Boards of Guardians are far enough advanced on the way to classification to have experienced this difficulty. I speak of course subject to correction, but I understand that the great majority of Boards of Guardians have adopted no system of classification whatever so far as this class of inmate is concerned.

The Poor Law which divides those receiving relief into the able-bodied, the sick, the aged over sixty, and the young, rather naturally leads to the presumption that all those over sixty are to be treated alike. They are no longer "able-bodied." Relaxations of discipline and a more indulgent dietary scale is prescribed for them. If tobacco or snuff is given, it is given to them, and they are selected for any treats or outings which may be available. Their clothing is to be non-distinctive. In short, the sixtieth birthday is a milestone: all those who have passed it, whatever the cause of their entering the Workhouse, whatever their conduct whilst in it, can legally be treated by the Guardians with certain indulgences which are prohibited for those under that age. I think it will be found that the practice of most Boards of Guardians follows the presumption of the law, and that all those past sixty are in the main treated alike.

The importance of considering this question is obvious when we remember that the vast majority of the inmates of Workhouses, both in London and country, are above the age of sixty, and that the overcrowding of our Workhouses is chiefly due to the influx of this class of the poor. Are we to treat them all alike as a privileged class?

That there are many very decent old people, both men and women, in our Workhouses, no one would

deny; and though there can be no doubt that many even of them need not have been there if they had thought more of old age when they were young, yet now that they are there, no one would be disposed to treat them harshly or to grudge them the little indulgences that the law allows. I have known a good many such myself, and I have certainly never felt the faintest wish to deprive them of any of the privileges which they enjoyed, as messengers or otherwise, so long as they made a good use of them. On the other hand, any one who has had any lengthened experience of the matter, knows that inmates over sixty differ just as much, both morally and physically, as those under sixty.

One point that will strike any one who has any experience of the subject is that many people who have passed the age limit are physically much more capable than others many years their juniors. A typical case is that of an old man of seventy-four, who is, or was till quite recently, an inmate of a London Workhouse. He is as hale and hearty a man as any one could wish to see. He has married a wife about forty years younger than himself, and has occupied his "declining" years in begetting a family of five or six young children, the eldest of whom cannot even now be much more than ten years old. The Guardians have kept his children almost continuously for several years, and himself and his wife intermittently. He has always pleaded that he is unable to find work on account of his age, and he has been constantly given passes "to look for work" for this reason. His wife also took her discharge from time to time, and only a few months ago returned to the Workhouse prepared to present the Guardians with another "Poor Law child." Subsequent inquiries have shown that upon at least one occasion when he was out on pass, and was representing to the Guardians that he was unable to get work, he was



actually at work, and earning over £1 a week. His employer spoke of him as a strong active man, and a good workman.

Another man, just over sixty—also strong and hearty—was let out repeatedly on pass to look for work. His want of success led to inquiries being made, and it was reported that he never prosecuted his researches further than “The Well and Bucket.”

Another old man, charged with coming in drunk, confesses his failings, but attributes the responsibility to his mother. “Sometimes,” he says, “I think it’s hereditary. My poor dear mother suffered from it badly, and I am her only boy.” Possibly those who believe that we are not responsible for our actions, but are the creatures of our environment, may be able to make some use of this.

Another typical case is that of an old pensioner. He has been in and out of the Workhouse for years. He goes out regularly about quarter day and has a debauch, and then returns to the Workhouse. His pension is one which is not attachable.

Some of the most malignant blackmailing charges against officers that it has been my misfortune to investigate have been made by old men over sixty. I remember one such, in which an old man who had been employed as a messenger in a certain Workhouse brought a series of charges against the then Master. The cause of his ill-will to the Master was that he had been removed from his post for some reason or other. The charges were, with some trifling exceptions, proved to be unfounded. *The old man had for a period of two years kept a note-book, in which he had noted down anything which he considered as a dereliction of duty by the Master, for use when occasion should serve.*

It would not be difficult to show that on the women’s side as well as on the men’s side the distinctions are equally wide. The woman who has

led a drunken, disreputable life, and has passed the age of sixty, is unhappily no uncommon phenomenon in London Workhouses. I remember one such, who had also had two daughters in the Workhouse, both of whom had come in with illegitimate children.

Again, it must be well known to all of us here that a very large number of the old people—both men and women—return from their weekly leave of absence the worse for drink; also that many of them are by no means too refined in their language. It must necessarily be a considerable hardship to those who are decent and respectable to be mixed up with these rougher elements. Miss Twining quotes a case in which a blind man in a London Workhouse was forced to go to bed at six in order to get away from the foul language used in the day-room. Altogether everything points to the necessity of some differentiation of treatment, as suggested by the Local Government Board, between those aged inmates of our Workhouses who are decent and respectable and those who are not. The notion that to be over sixty confers of itself a halo of respectability is a dangerous fallacy. If Metropolitan Workhouses are not to be swamped with those who have been and are still leading dissipated and disreputable lives, greater stringency will have to be adopted in respect to them both as a matter of public policy and in fairness to the more decent inmates. A fair percentage at least of those who frequent our Workhouses need not be there at all if they behaved themselves even moderately well outside. We must all of us know cases, for instance, in which children would have kept their parents away from the Workhouse altogether but for their intolerable and continued misbehaviour.

The difficulties of classification are, as already pointed out, considerable. But we can, at all events, refrain from encouraging impenitent old age by gifts of tobacco, snuff, and sweets, by unlimited liberty to

come and go, and by dressing it up in clothes which are sometimes better than those of the respectable tradesman outside. It is not at all necessary to go into people's past lives. The line of demarcation between those who behave themselves decently and respectably and those who do not is quite sufficiently defined, and no good Workhouse Master, if he has the support of his Board, will find much difficulty in doing justice, broadly speaking. But he must have the support of his Board, or he is powerless. If Guardians have no confidence in the Master of their Workhouse, the sooner they get rid of him the better.

We now come to the next class of poor—the “sick poor.” Let us take four typical London Unions at random—North, South, East, and West; and we shall see how the “not able-bodied” indoor poor have increased since 1893.

Not Able-bodied Indoor Poor.					
			Jan. 1, 1893.	Jan. 1, 1898.	*
St Pancras	-	-	2,501*	2,959	458
St Saviour's	-	-	3,126	3,634	508
Poplar	-	-	1,522	2,209	687
St Marylebone	-	-	1,872	2,377	505

B. Returns—Local Government Board.

It will be admitted that the increases under this head in five years are remarkable. It may be added that the increase throughout London is general.

I hope that this matter will be fully discussed by those who know much more about it than I do. If the increase were accompanied by a decrease in the numbers of those receiving outdoor relief, one might be disposed to think that there was a growing tendency on the part of the poor to avail themselves of the magnificent buildings which have been and are being erected for their benefit, but that is not the case; the number of outdoor poor has increased concurrently. If all those who are in Poor Law institutions for the sick are legitimate objects of free medical relief, I feel



sure that none of us will grudge the improved medical treatment. It would be interesting to hear whether much inquiry is made into Infirmary cases. Some of us know the Relieving Officer's report at Relief Committees: "So-and-so admitted during the week to the infirmary—no one liable—approved"—and the matter is at an end. Of course many Boards may investigate strictly in all such cases, and it would be instructive to hear their opinions. I think that this matter is of great importance. It would appear that we are at present in a position of drift upon this question. On the one hand, we have those who say that all the "poor" should receive free medical relief from the State. It is not very clearly defined who "the poor" are. Is the small tradesman, is the artisan earning his £2 a week, to be classed as such? Are the curate, the briefless barrister, and the bank clerk to come within the category? If not, where are we to draw the line? The position now is that there are some 12,000 beds in Metropolitan Poor Law Infirmaries, and extensions and new buildings are in progress on all sides. Meanwhile there are over 10,000 beds in the London Hospitals. We shall sooner or later have to make up our minds on this great question of medical relief.

We now come to the children: I have little to say as to them under this head. We are all agreed, I believe, that everything possible should be done to bring them up with sound bodies and sound minds. I believe, however, that the numbers of children in our Poor Law institutions might be largely reduced if parental responsibility were more generally enforced. I well remember in my own schools how we reduced the numbers by an overhaul some years ago. We found fathers and mothers who had been lost sight of for years, and the schools, which had been greatly overcrowded, have since kept well within the registered number.

Perhaps it may be well, whilst upon this subject, to call attention to the dangers that will probably arise

from the multiplication of separate establishments for children under the Metropolitan Asylums Board. It is difficult enough to enforce parental responsibility when parents and children are under one authority; it becomes almost impossible when they are under two.

And now we come to the last class of inmates, and by no means the least important one. I mean the able-bodied adults.

Comparing January 1, 1893, with January 1, 1898, there were of able-bodied adults "not suffering from any temporary disability," as follows:—

		Men.	Women.	Total.
Jan. 1, 1893	- -	2,175	2,128	4,303
„ 1898	- -	2,899	2,434	5,333
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		+ 724	+ 306	+ 1,030

The typical able-bodied "in-and-out" is usually a happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care sort of fellow, whose chief characteristic is that he is totally devoid of any wish to maintain himself. He can often work and work well by fits and starts; but he has come to look upon the Workhouse or the casual ward as his home, and when he has once got that idea into his head, it is extremely difficult to get it out again.

I knew one such, a young fellow of about thirty, who has been in and out of the Workhouse since he was fourteen. He is short and thick-set, strong and well-made, not bad-looking, with dark curly hair. He has all his wits about him, and if there had been no Poor Law would undoubtedly have been earning his own living. Several times within my recollection he has disappeared for a short time, and it has been reported that he is at work. He has, however, invariably turned up again, stating upon almost every occasion that he has had "an accident" which has obliged him to throw up his work. He is by turns threatened, cajoled, lectured, and prosecuted, but all in vain. He takes it all quite good-humouredly. When

I last had to do with him, he mildly remarked that "he had not been in and out so *wonderful* many times."

Another I remember was always in and out "because of his leg." It was quite true that he had a sore place on his leg, but the medical officer, who knew him of old, hinted that that sore place was as good as an old-age pension to him, and that it was not very likely that he would allow it to heal. He was otherwise an able-bodied, healthy man.

Another strong, active young man who "could not get work," was passing his time in a flirtation with one of the ladies on the other side of the House. An intercepted letter, which ran as follows, was one day laid before the Guardians:—

"Dear liz lizey I am going out on Monday. If you like you can come with me. I shall wait for you at the prince of wails.—yrs truly, Bill."

Flirtations of this kind are by no means uncommon in Workhouse life. Probably every Workhouse has its "in-and-out" couple who have originally been "married by the chaplain of the Workhouse." Sometimes even the aged succumb. I know two old fellows who have taken to themselves wives from amongst the female inmates. In neither case, I regret to say, have the marriages turned out happily. "She isn't at all the sort of woman I expected," said one of them plaintively; "she drinks a bit."

Can flirtations be reckoned amongst the attractions of a Workhouse?

The question of "extra diet to helpers" should be considered by the Conference. It is, I am told, not uncommon in London Workhouses, and doubtless counts as one of the attractions to the able-bodied. At first sight it would appear that if a man or woman can work inside a Workhouse they can work outside, and that they would be better outside. If, however, they prefer to remain in, then they should work for their keep. In neither case is it good either for them



or for the ratepayers to bribe them to stay. I assume, of course, that the Workhouse has a proper and sufficient dietary scale.

There are some who think that the able-bodied day-room, both on the men's side and on the women's, has its charms for a certain class of inmate. They are said to be scenes of a certain rough conviviality, not always of too lofty a tone, which is dear to the heart of the able-bodied in-and-out. The supervision is, as a rule, not very stringent, and one has heard of such things as card-playing, chuck-penny, and other similar amusements being carried on there, *sub rosâ*. One Board of Guardians at least has interfered with such amusements by appointing "mental instructors," whose business it is to spend a certain time in the day-rooms, and to endeavour to influence their inhabitants in the right direction.

The question of the able-bodied inmate has been much discussed during the last few years. We have heard much of "paupers' paradises" and the like, which shows which way the wind blows, though I always suspect, when I see that a particular Board has been gibbeted, that it is no worse than its neighbours. We have all had our difficulties, and I think that the most of us have done our best to grapple with them. I am told that some Boards of Guardians have been exceptionally successful in dealing with this class. Perhaps any of their delegates who may be present to-day will tell us how they set to work.

In illustration of the "attractiveness" of the Workhouse for able-bodied women, I heard recently two stories, both quite authentic, from the same Workhouse. In both cases situations had been found for women by the Matron or otherwise. In the first case, the inmate in question consented to go to the situation, but represented that she must be back at the Workhouse in time for the "Christmas entertainment." In the other case, that of a girl with an illegitimate

child, she went to the situation, but soon came back to the Workhouse, as she said that the work was not so hard there, and the hours were shorter. Moreover, in private service she had to get her own breakfast.

I cannot leave this subject without quoting some lines that were sent to me one day by an inmate of our Infirmary, who had evidently been studying this question :—

“I’m the able-bodied Fee-Foh-Fum—  
From the warm Workhouseward I come ;  
And whether they can or cannot pay,  
I swallow ratepayers every day.”

It has been shown that able-bodied indoor pauperism has been on the increase in the last five years. No doubt this is partly due to some of the causes indicated above. But we may also ask ourselves whether it is not also partly due to the increase of shelters and charity-supported lodging-houses. Every one who has helped to manage a Workhouse knows the extent to which it is fed from those sources. Vagrancy, like all pauperism, increases or decreases in direct ratio to the facilities provided for it, and many, I believe, get in the shelter the first taste of the cup which they drain to the dregs in the Workhouse.

The law, or the interpretation of it by magistrates, is a serious obstacle to Guardians in their efforts to repress able-bodied pauperism. The able-bodied in-and-out, however flagrant his case, can flout any Board of Guardians unless they can prove that he has work to go to and has refused to do it. Again, any trifling ailment, such as would be made nothing of by the working population at large, is accepted as sufficient excuse by a magistrate.

There are a few other points in connection with this question of the attractiveness or otherwise of Workhouses which should, I think, be discussed by the Conference. The first is that of giving clothes to those who are leaving the workhouse. Of course there are times

when it is necessary to do this. The inmate's own clothes may have been lost or destroyed, or a friendless man may be discharged from the Infirmary, and the doctor may certify that his own clothing is insufficient to keep him warm. Or it may be a case in which a girl or young woman is to be sent to service. If it were certain that nothing but the want of a coat or a pair of boots stood between an able-bodied man and his chances of work, we should all, I feel sure, get it for him somehow. If the matter rested there, and were confined to such cases, it would hardly be necessary to allude to the subject. It is quite possible that many of us here have quite clear consciences in the matter, and that what I have to say will not concern them in any way. I believe, however, that in some Workhouses the giving away of clothes has attained very considerable proportions. I was talking to a gentleman of great experience a few days ago on the subject, and I said, "Does your Board give away clothes?" His answer was, "Of course it does. Often a man who comes before it says, 'If you will give me a pair of boots I will tramp away, and you shall never hear of me again,' and my Board think that the cheapest thing to do is to give him a pair of boots." I was struck by the remark, because I had heard exactly the same thing said myself upon more than one occasion.

What usually happens, I take it, is this. A Committee is formed for the examination of fresh admissions to the Workhouse. It starts full of zeal and good-will, determined to reduce the numbers in the Workhouse by getting the young out into institutions intended for them, by helping those willing to work to obtain work as far as possible, by removing the non-settled poor, and by the stringent treatment of the able-bodied loafer. It has its weekly meetings, before which all the fresh admissions of the week are brought, and their history investigated. It meets with considerable success, especially at first, in getting lads of sixteen away pos-



sibly to Working Boys' Homes, or, with the aid of the Matron, in getting young women into situations ; or in helping, by some outside means, the more hopeful of the able-bodied inmates to start work. It usually finds a large number of non-settled poor whom it is instrumental in removing to other Unions. Naturally, times being good and employment plentiful, it expects before long to see the fruit of its labours in a reduction of the numbers in the Workhouse. I am told, however, that these anticipations are by no means generally realised, and that it not infrequently happens that, in spite of its endeavours, the numbers continue to increase.

I believe that that result is due to one or more of the following reasons :—In the first place, the usual weekly appearance before the Committee begins in time to be recognised as the opportunity for the application for something, usually clothing or passes to look for work. These may have been granted in the first instance in perfectly legitimate cases, such as those above specified, but when you have a Committee which is known to grant such things, and it soon becomes known, applications multiply at an astounding rate. We thus have, on the one side, a sympathetic Committee—Committees are always sympathetic ; on the other, an applicant who says that he could get work, or at least would free the ratepayers from the burden of keeping him, if he had, let us say, a pair of boots. The difficulty of testing his statement is insuperable. There can only be one result—he gets the boots. In this manner the granting both of clothes and passes soon assumes very large proportions.

That this in some cases—it may possibly be in very few cases—constitutes an “attraction” of the Workhouse, is, I think, clear from the following authentic dialogues.

A young and lusty tramp appears before the Committee.

*Chairman.* “Well, what brings you in here?”

*Tramp.* "A pair of boots."

A well-known character who has been passed to another Union turns up again.

*Chairman.* "What! *you* here again. You know you have rendered yourself liable to prosecution. I should like to know what you have to say for yourself?"

*Well-known Character.* "Well, I hadn't got no trousers to go out in: that partly brought me in."

Another *habitué* does not even wait to be questioned, but begins at once—"I came in for a pair of trousers this time."

I have been told that in a certain Workhouse, where "passes" were given on a liberal scale, there gradually accumulated a large number of "ghosts." Many of those to whom passes had been given absconded—temporarily, at all events. They had not been marked off as discharged, and were therefore still technically inmates of the Workhouse. The fact was not discovered till a new Master held a call-over of the Workhouse.

I think we shall agree that the granting both of clothing and passes should be left in the hands of the Master.

There are other reasons why a Committee of Examination soon becomes popular, in spite of the fact that a great number of those who come before it receive "severe reprimands" from the Chairman. Severe reprimands, however, when repeated possibly for the twentieth time to the same inmate, are apt to lose their force, and even a chairman's resources of language are not inexhaustible. Meanwhile there are many who, I firmly believe, delight in their weekly appearance before the Guardians. Some like to have a chat, and give them a bit of their mind. "If it wasn't for the likes of us, I should like to know where the likes of you would be?" said a promising youth of nineteen to our respected Chairman one day. The question still remains unanswered.

Another handed us one day, with a low bow, a copy of verses, the subject of which was our unworthy selves. It began—

“Who are the powers at Bethnal Green,  
Whose conduct’s base, and low, and mean?  
Our Guardians!”

And so forth in similar strain. We had had some difference of opinion with him as to his settlement, which it took us nearly two years to ascertain, hence his animus. We passed him, and now some other Board has its laureate. Even if they had nothing in our conduct to censure, they liked to have a chat. I have heard it said also that they liked coming before the Committee because they got an extra shave that day.

From all I can hear, the dietary scales of different London Workhouses vary considerably. I have one before me which is said to be “the best in London,” and which gives those over sixty butcher meat four times a week, bacon or pork the fifth, and meat puddings and meat broth on the other two days. Though this is said to be the best, I believe that there are several other Unions in which the scale is practically the same, and the tendency in all Unions is now to pay more attention to the feeding of the inmates than to any other matter. I read in a paper the other day the following:—“Ample food supply at ——.” The Guardians had asked the Local Government Board to sanction an addition of half a pint of milk a day to the present dietary. The Local Government Board reply that they will do so, “provided that some readjustment be made in the present dietary.” The Clerk pointed out that at present the inmates had a breakfast, lunch, a dinner, an early cup of tea and three ounces of cake, tea again with bread and butter and more cake, and then a supper. One of the Guardians, “*What* a day’s feeding!”

Again, an inquest was held last year upon an inmate who had died suddenly in a London Workhouse.



The doctor certified that the cause of death was syncope, produced by an overloaded stomach acting upon a diseased heart. The Coroner: "One may say that he was killed by kindness. It may or may not be kindness to overload a man's stomach. Well, it shows that he did not go short of food." The doctor: "Short! By no means. They have nothing to do but eat, drink, and sleep. And this is the third case from the same Workhouse where death has been due to an overloaded stomach." A Juror: "When I am out of work I shall want to go there!"

If we are to believe what we hear stated with constant reiteration, Guardians themselves are not altogether regardless of the pleasures of the table—"guzzling," I believe, is the technical term—and it is perhaps natural that their standard of happiness for others should be that which they adopt for themselves. Still the question rather forces itself upon one whether it is right to treat those who have come into the Workhouse—in some cases at least by their own fault—so much more generously than the independent labourer outside can afford to treat himself. It must not be forgotten that outdoor relief, which is given in all but three Unions in London, is given professedly to the more deserving, so that it is the "undeserving" who would naturally gravitate to the Workhouse.

I would remind those who are now engaged in considering the matter that the question is no new one. In the year 1835 a document, of which the following is an extract, was posted on the walls of a certain Workhouse in Kent. It contained the terms of the contract between the Guardians and contractors for the catering for that Workhouse. The contractors were to furnish "warm, wholesome, sweet, comfortable beds; servants to cook and serve the victuals and attend on the poor; good, sweet, wholesome fat meat; good sound small beer; best flour; good Gloucester cheese; good and clean butter. Pork and salt meat

were forbidden, but bacon and fish were allowed as a variety. The fires were to be good and kept up in certain rooms at all hours, so that the paupers might boil their kettles. Lastly, the contractors were to supply wigs for such as wear them or require them." Earlier again, at Bedford, Sir F. Eden gives the dietary of the Workhouse, where meat was given six days a week, and broth and "hasty pudding" the seventh. Of this Sir F. Eden, writing in 1797, says, "The food was better than the most industrious labourer, either then or at present, could afford himself in his own habitation." I may add that in those days small beer was usually given for supper every night, and "good strong beer" on Christmas Day.

I have only two more points that I shall bring before the Conference in connection with this question. The first is, that of entertainments and treats. I have no data to show me to what extent these prevail, but I gather as a matter of general knowledge that they are given to a considerable extent in most Workhouses. Personally I have nothing to say against them if they are given to the right people. But—and I am now only giving my own experience—at one at which I was present not many months ago, I noticed that practically all the inmates of the Workhouse, including the able-bodied, were present. We had some excellent music, and a good entertainment generally. We then made some speeches; and finally it was announced that every one on leaving the hall would be presented with an orange and a bun. At the back of the hall I saw my curly-headed friend, whom I have described earlier in this paper, smiling upon me from afar, and doubtless he filed out with the others and received his orange and his bun. I bear no ill-will to him—quite the contrary—but I cannot help thinking that it was not good for him to be there.

The last question is that of non-distinctive dress. I believe that almost every Board of Guardians in

London has adopted it, as suggested by the Local Government Board. I have made some inquiries, and I find the general impression to be that it has worked satisfactorily. Some Boards have, I believe, found it useful as a means of classification, giving it only to those who return sober from their leave. Others have probably given it to all without distinction. One difficulty that appears to arise is the difficulty of finding any dress which is "not distinctive"—the real fact being that the clothes as a rule are so much better than those worn by people of the same class outside, that it is impossible not to identify the inmate out for his weekly walk. I well remember, when the matter first came before my own Board, how we had hats and bonnets of every conceivable shape, with every variety of trimming—double-breasted reefers and every variety of trouserings. It was a most arduous task. Finally we rigged out the old men at least in a very neat and workmanlike manner. With the old women we were not so fortunate. One fine day they all blossomed out with dresses some with red moons on a blue ground, some with white moons upon a brown ground. The dress, alas! though smart was more distinctive than ever.

Let me then summarise the points referred to in this paper for the consideration of the Conference.

The first is that the vast majority of the inmates in our Workhouses are over sixty. Are we to consider them all as a privileged class, or are we to classify them upon the lines suggested by the Local Government Board? If separation of the classes is impossible owing to want of space, I would suggest that at least the extra indulgences which are commonly given to old people might be reserved for those who behave themselves respectably in the Workhouse, and when out on leave.

Secondly, with regard to the sick—a class constantly increasing—I think we should hear what pre-



cautions are taken to restrict free medical relief to those who are properly objects of it.

Thirdly, with regard to children in Poor Law Schools, what steps are taken to enforce parental responsibility? It would be interesting to ascertain the proportion of *deserted* children in Poor Law Schools.

Fourthly, with regard to able-bodied adults, whether they are given extra diet for work done in the Workhouse; whether they have supervision in the day-rooms; and lastly, what facilities there are for giving them task-work.

Next, is it a common practice for Boards of Guardians to give away clothes to those leaving the Workhouse? The fact that the Local Government Board has issued a special minute upon the subject appears to show that it is at least a recognised practice.

Do Boards of Guardians in London grant "passes to look for work" to any considerable extent? If so, do they do it through a Committee, or through the Master of the Workhouse?

Lastly, there are the questions of treats and entertainments, dietary scale and clothing. How far is it advisable to place the inmate of a Workhouse upon a better footing than the independent labourer?

I have only a word more to say. I have endeavoured throughout this paper to avoid the discussion of the action of any particular Board of Guardians, and treat the question as a general one. I hope that those who follow me will take the same line. We all want to get at the truth of this matter, and we can only do so by dispassionate discussion. Anything in the nature of censure or criticism of one another only postpones indefinitely the possibility of arriving at any sort of agreement. The divergence of opinion upon all Poor Law questions is, we all know, wide enough, and there is no need to add bitterness to it. On the one side, we have those (I hope I am putting their case

fairly) who think that it is best for the community that the maintenance of the poor, especially of the aged poor, should be a common burden ; on the other, those who believe it to be best that the poor should as far as possible be independent of State aid, and that the number of those who are dependent should be reduced to as narrow limits as possible. They believe, to quote the words of the Poor Law Commissioners, that the Poor Law should be "centrifugal and not centripetal." They know that the effects of State aid cannot be confined to the individual case in which it is given, but that its effects are felt throughout the community. They believe that the policy of any given Board of Guardians has a far-reaching effect, not only upon the poor that are seen, but upon the poor that are not seen ; not only upon the poor of the present generation, but upon the poor of the next generation. The Poor Law in the past has been a dismal history of successive attempts to improve the condition of the working classes by affording greater facilities of relief. These attempts have been followed by repeated failure, owing to the consequent increase of pauperism, and then by reaction. Can we do nothing better than this at the end of the nineteenth century?

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#### DISCUSSION.

Mr W. BROWN (Chairman of the Lewisham Board of Guardians) opened the discussion. First of all, he thanked Mr Bailward for the very excellent paper which he had delivered. Classification he saw was the basis of the successful working of a Workhouse. They were very solicitous about the able-bodied paupers in his Board. They had erected mills for grinding corn, and other things. When an able-bodied pauper came in, immediately they found he was an "in-and-out," they applied various tests to him in order to get rid of him. The result was that while they had seventy or eighty able-bodied paupers one year, they had only about thirteen that day. A fair amount of attention and consideration should be given to the remainder. For the children they could hardly do too much, and from his point of view the sick could not be too well treated. They should have the best medical attention, ventilation, and buildings. It was the cheapest way to cure and get rid of them. As to the

old people, there was a very great distinction to be drawn about people over sixty. They made their "young sixties" very useful about the House. Now that they had lost so many of their able-bodied, they got a lot of their "young sixties" to do the work that had been provided for the able-bodied. They found that many a man of sixty was able to do as much work as one of forty, whilst the older men were able to sit down at wood-chopping; and those who were not equal to that could go on with "Brabzon" work. With regard to the question of entertainments, &c., some Guardians became too sentimental on these points. The inmates should not be treated so that more poor ratepayers who were struggling outside should be contributing towards the keep of those persons who so kindly took to the Workhouse.

Mr R. H. BROOKS (Wandsworth and Clapham) endorsed a great deal that was in Mr Bailward's paper. He thought in some things he was somewhat severe, and he was somewhat extreme in his illustrations. It was a most important matter to attain to something like uniformity of treatment in the several Workhouses. He had been astonished at the difference of treatment of the inmates in the different Metropolitan Workhouses. He thought there should be uniformity of the work and diet. He had visited a Workhouse in which there were about 900 aged and infirm over sixty, and scarcely a dozen able-bodied. These men had actually renovated the dining hall of that Workhouse, and a more cheerful dining hall he had never seen in any Workhouse. The men did the work with pleasure, and it saved the Guardians of that Union £100. They didn't employ any paid labourers in that Workhouse. Some of them understood shoemaking, some tailoring, and so on, and they taught the others. They were very pleased to do the work. To his mind that was a model Workhouse. When inmates felt they were doing something to relieve the rates they were evidently happiest.

Rev. JOSEPH SHAW (Epsom) said that the subject of the paper was very interesting, but he should have liked the paper to have been more definite in its claim to prove that the increase of indoor pauperism during the last five years in London, and England and Wales generally, was directly and exclusively due to the increased attractions of the Workhouses. They had had no such proof. They had a broad assumption, but no proof of this; there were no data or facts put forward to justify the assumption. This increase was a very serious matter, and he thought that there should be most careful investigation of the actual and probable causes that led to it before they told the public that it was the Guardians and the officers employed by them, who, by pushing to an extreme the benevolent administration of the Poor Law, were responsible for it. He thought he could give some figures to prove that the increase in indoor and outdoor pauperism was directly and exclusively attributable to the economic pressure, not only during the last five years, but during the last ten years. Economic changes were taking place. He could give



instance after instance of men who had been employed for years with some firm, but who when they got over fifty years of age were considered as likely to become more burdensome than the present condition of competition in business would allow. Why, they wouldn't have a curate now at sixty, nor at fifty if they could find one at forty-five. In the rural districts gardeners were got rid of when they got to fifty for younger men. The younger generation was better educated and more adaptable, and these qualities were of great advantage to employers of labour.

Mr PETER LAWSON (Fulham) fully endorsed the remarks of the last speaker but one. He had been ten years connected with his Union, and they had wonderful changes in their Workhouse, and these changes were brought about by their appointing the right Master. Their Workhouse was one of the finest in London. If a Master were supported by his House Committee and his Guardians he could bring about many reforms. They employed their old men, who were delighted to work, as the work was made to their liking. The most mischievous men were old men who had nothing to do. Their House was contented, and they very seldom had cause to punish any one. He thought something should be done with regard to the number of married women who came to the Workhouses at certain times, and were treated like ladies. They made the Workhouse a house of call. Their husbands, who should have made provision for them, were lazy outside. Something should be done, so that when the wives were sent out, the husbands should be made to pay.

Mr BERRY (Hartley Wintney) in the course of his remarks said they often found a man and wife had worked and toiled for thirty years, who reared a family and probably emigrated, and who were unable any longer to work on the farm on which they had lived. To some of them they gave perhaps 4s. 6d. a week and a loaf. If they gave them too much bread they gave it away, for old people's capacity for eating bread was limited. This allowance, with what little they could pick up elsewhere, made them very glad to stay out of the Workhouse. He thought it was high time, if it could be arranged, that a working man and a working woman who had lived for over thirty years together should not be separated.

Miss H. B. HERFORD (Hampstead) thought that the increase of the inmates was very largely due to the labour question and not to the treatment in the Workhouses. In the Workhouse with which she was connected the old people were increasing largely, and they had very few able-bodied. Workhouses had a large number of drawbacks from the pauper's point of view. These paupers had gone their own way all their lives, and the first drawback they met with in the Workhouse were the rules and regulations. They might make a fire as big as they liked, but the fact that the inmates couldn't poke it, or have it in or out as they chose, was an annoyance to them. Masters said that the inmates should not be made jealous of one another, and that what was done for one should be done for all.

That, she thought, was a mistake. If they gave half-a-dozen people cake they felt the pleasure of it—an increased pleasure because the others didn't get it. In their Union they had the best married quarters in England. But the people couldn't do what they liked, and that was the deterrent. If they were untidy the officers came down upon them : if they wanted to go to bed earlier than usual they could not. If they had a few more individual comforts they would put up with a lot of other inconveniences.

Mr JESSE HAWKES (Malling) thought that there were two main influences which had been at work tending to bring about the more humane treatment of paupers ; these were the growth of humane sentiment and economic causes. Suitable employment for the paupers had a great moral effect. They never saw a batch of old horses who had not some owner and who did not possess an economic value. Thousands of men had a value, but no one seemed to have hit upon a plan by which that value could be realised.

Mr W. BROWN (Epsom) said that at Epsom they had had a decrease in their indoor poor until last year. They had suffered somewhat from the fact of large building operations. This had tended to increase the number of people in their infirmary, owing to accidents, and had also increased the number of vagrants. However, they had a decrease of something like 800 outdoor paupers, and their condition was tolerably satisfactory. They were very liberal and generous at Epsom, but that liberality and generosity was not in their case a cause of increase in numbers.

Mrs PERCY CACKETT (Wandsworth) said that it was simply on the paper so far as it dealt with the old people that she wished to speak. They were getting first or second crop of old people from the existing economic conditions. That would go on increasing. The average wage worked out at £1 a week per adult male. Some of the workpeople had only intermittent work, bringing them in from 18s. to £2 at the outside. They had to bring up a family, join a burial club, and so on, and often keep their aged parents. What chance had these for providing for their old age? She protested against a paper which said that they should do everything they could to send these people out of the Workhouses. They couldn't get away from the facts. Her own solution of the problem was old age pensions for people who had worked up to sixty. It was not in the power of the Guardians to deal with this, but she believed if the Guardians took the matter up and brought pressure to bear on the proper quarters they could bring the thing about. If a man or a woman had not applied to the Poor Law until after sixty, they must have done a fair amount of work in their time, and they ought to have a Workhouse or a pension. When they had made that classification they could make a Workhouse what it ought to be, and they could treat them uniformly.

Mr J. RICHARDS (Whitchurch) did not think that the increase was due to the attractions of the Workhouses, but to other circumstances.



which he need not repeat. But there was one cause which had not been mentioned—the increase was partly due to the increase of population. People flocked in from the rural districts into the towns. In the rural district which he represented they had no increase: they had no able-bodied men. They had one, but the Chairman promised to find work for him, so in three or four days he made himself scarce.

Mr PALIN (Portsea Island), speaking with reference to the case of a pensioner mentioned by a previous speaker, said he should like to hear the particulars of that case, and he would tell them a remedy. They had such cases at his Board. He was an old pensioner himself. A pension was a realisable asset of a man's estate, and the authorities dealing with pensions were only too ready to help Boards of Guardians in such matters.

Hon. Mrs CROPPER (Kendal) said that with reference to the extra diet, she thought that in the case of the aged there was a little danger of too much pressure being put upon them. They deserved a rest. The extra diet was a very bad way of finding out whether they worked or not.

Mr S. KIMBEL (Poplar) said he belonged to a rather small Workhouse—they had about 5,330 inmates. When he came to this Conference he thought he should hear some remedies—some way that they might be relieved of some of their burdens. His idea was that they should be able to move the House of Commons, the Local Government Board, and such large bodies, and they should make all the relief a common charge on the Common Poor Fund. Then they would soon relieve their Workhouses.

Mr WILLINK (Bradfield) said that no one could contest that industrial conditions had to do with the increase of paupers, but the questions raised by the paper were quite apart from that. He thought that the inmates who behaved themselves well should have a preference, but that was a point which could be left in the hands of the Masters. With regard to the sick, were they prepared to say that it was wise to give free medicine to every one? Every one that could pay ought to pay. With regard to children, what steps were taken to enforce parental responsibility? With regard to entertainments and treats, he should be very sorry to put any undue restrictions on Christmas treats, but these things could be carried too far.

Mr O'CONNOR (Stepney) thought that they had sufficient powers to deal with every case that came before them. If there was a Workhouse that gave five or six meals a day that Union could be surcharged, and the Master could be prosecuted for mal-administration. With regard to the old people, what were they to do? They had given their lives to the State, and the State should see that they were well treated. As for the loafer who wanted to spend his time in the Workhouse, he would make him 'list in the army. The Metropolitan Guardians were as different in their systems as the Metropolis differed from Kent. There was no cohesion. They



were all little kings in their own way. He wished that the police visited the tramp wards. Very often some of these tramps came in for a day or two in order to hide after committing some crime.

Mr CROUCHER (Farnham) said that in the rural districts the people who came in were about seventy, and these dear old people should have every indulgence. In his Workhouse they refused to give drink at Xmas, and some of the men went out and worked. They had not one able-bodied in their House. Let them clear drink out of the Workhouse and they would get rid of some of the able-bodied.

Mr BAILWARD, in the course of his reply, said that one point raised against him was that the cause of the increase was not the great attractiveness of Workhouses, but economic changes. Whenever relief was made more attractive pauperism increased, and though he had not definitely said that that was the cause of the present increase, it certainly suggested that it had that tendency. The Conference had not taken up his point about the classification of those over sixty. There should be a real line of demarcation, not a sham one. He quite agreed with the delegate who maintained that the discipline of the Workhouse acted as a deterrent.

After a unanimous vote of thanks to Mr Bailward had been passed, the Conference adjourned for lunch, after which Mr Duncan Milligan occupied the chair, in the absence of the President.

Miss BROMFIELD then read the following Paper:—

## THE EMIGRATION OF PAUPER CHILDREN.

BY MISS EMILY BROMFIELD,

*Guardian of the New Winchester Union, and Hon. Sec. to the United British Women's Emigration Association.*

IN entering on such an important question as that of the emigration of the children of the State, perhaps I may be allowed at once to divide the subject under four heads, and to spend a few minutes in the consideration of each.

First, then, I should like to speak of the needs and reasons for such emigration.

Secondly, on its legal position.

Thirdly, on the selection and education of those who go out, and on the methods of sending them.

Fourthly, to refer to some of the results, past, present, and future, of such emigration.

I suppose there is no one present, who is a Guardian, and interested in the children of his or her Union, who will not agree with me that one of our greatest difficulties is to keep our boys and girls from going back to the old life, even when they have been separated from it for years. As they grow up, wicked relations, who very often have no legal claim to them, begin to seek them out, with a keen sense of what can be made out of them; they follow them and track them down, the tie of blood is stronger than any other, hereditary tendencies revive, and the result is, that the care and education of years is often thrown away in a few months.

I know of nothing sadder in all the years I have been a Guardian than it is to see a young girl, who has been carefully brought up in a Training Home, and has been started in a good situation, and who is doing well, hunted down by disreputable relations, unsettled in her place till she leaves it, then stripped of her outfit and all she possesses, and finally coming back into the Union, to be taken out and started afresh, and again to be unsettled, till she sinks to her original level, and is ruined morally and physically.

Now, there can be no question but that emigration is one of the greatest solutions of this difficulty, and that if children are taken away entirely from their old life—and to do this nowadays you must almost put the ocean between them—and sent to a country where there is room enough, and work enough, and air enough for them, their chances of retrogression are very much lessened.

Let us look for a moment at what our children cost the country. On the 1st of January 1898, the number of children in England supported by the rates was—Receiving indoor relief, 52,505; receiving outdoor relief, 173,147; making a total of 225,652. As regards those receiving indoor relief, each child cost the ratepayer at least £10 a year; they generally cost more.

£10 a year means £525,050, and it is a very important matter—indeed, it is our duty—to make sure that we are spending this money so as to do the best for the children, for ourselves, and for the country at large. First, then, to consider the question from an economic point. While we keep the children here, they are costing us £10 to £14 a year, plus all the dangers they will be in, morally, when they grow up, from bad relations, from lack of work caused by over-population, and from the evil associations of their early days. If we send them to Canada, they will cost us only £10 or £12 to start them, and under the new regulations, a few pounds for inspection, and all the risks I have mentioned are at once removed. How satisfactory the result of this removal is, is proved by the record that failure among these children, when emigrated, is rather under 5 per cent. But this is only a present view of the case. It is a well-known fact that when such children grow up in England, a large number come back to the Workhouse, especially amongst our girls, and I fear far more than 5 per cent. of our boys drift back into our casual wards as tramps; so that we are constantly bringing up, as it were, a store of persons, expensive to the State, useless to the State, dangerous to the State.

Again, in the question of over-population, which becomes every year a more pressing one, every child helped to begin and take up life in a colony is a unit to the good in solving this serious problem.

Again, if when these children go out to Canada, they grow up, as it has been proved they do grow up, honest, hard-working, well-conducted citizens, we are, when we send them, helping to develop and consolidate our Empire, and sending a wage-earning population to where their work has not only a monetary but a national value.

In fact, then, we are actually conferring a general benefit; we save ourselves expense; we benefit the



unpeopled parts of our Empire ; we lessen the risk of rearing a dangerous and useless class in our midst ; we increase our trade ; and last, and most important reason of all, we give chances to many human souls and bodies of health, happiness, and prosperity which would not otherwise be open to them.

It may be interesting to glance briefly at the legislation which has made the emigration of the children of the State possible.

As early as 1834, under certain conditions, the Poor Law Amendment Act gave powers to levy a rate for the emigration of poor persons ; and later on, several Acts, passed in the reign of the present Queen, dealt more or less with the emigration of pauper and deserted children, until in 1874, reports coming back to the Local Government Board that the condition of the children in their Canadian homes was not satisfactory, the Poor Law Commission withdrew their consent to the Guardians emigrating pauper children.

After a time an arrangement was come to between the Imperial Government and the Canadian Government, to the effect that official inspection should be made of all children sent out by Boards of Guardians ; and that such children should be visited by the immigration officials of the Department of Agriculture, and that a report should be sent home to the Local Government Board for the use of the Guardians of the various Unions from which the children had been emigrated.

In 1888, the Order for this inspection was made still more stringent ; and this spring, the Local Government Board, after reconsidering the matter, and finding that for the most part the immigration officers only made *one* inspection of the children, ordered further, that Unions sending out the emigrants should pay down a sum to ensure such inspection annually, until the boy or girl reaches the age of sixteen, the amount varying

according to the age at which the child is sent out. The Dominion Government, on their part, promise that the Minister of the Interior, on receiving such payment, will arrange that the inspections be regularly made, and returns sent.

But this official inspection has its reverse side, for it is reported that both the foster-parents and the children themselves very much dislike it, especially the girls as they grow older, and become more completely part of the family in which they live, as they do not want all their neighbours and friends to be reminded of the circumstances under which they came out. A most natural feeling, and one which certainly exists very strongly amongst girls in England, who have been brought up in Workhouse Schools, and who are doing well in life.

It is also said that the inspectors teach the children that their employers and foster-parents have very little control over them, and so render them much less easy to manage.

Children eligible for emigration must be orphan or deserted, or if they have a parent living, he or she must sign a declaration consenting to the child going out, and promising to give it up. If girls, they must be under twelve years of age. The children themselves have to state before a magistrate that they wish to emigrate.

But for many years before children were sent out by the ratepayers, philanthropic agencies had been gathering in and distributing in Canada exactly the class of children who, without such aid, would have come under the care of the Poor Law. In 1869, Miss Rye took out her first party of 73 children, and since that date many thousands have been transported from starvation and misery here to happiness and plenty in Canada. Dr Barnardo has sent out over 10,000; Mr Fegan, at the Southwark Boys' Home, 1,400; Mr Middlemore, Mrs Macpherson, and several others

have also been engaged in the work. Miss Rye carried on her labours for many years, and her Home is now taken over by the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society. Mr and Mrs Bilborough Wallace, of the Marchmont Home, Belleville, Ontario, to whose kind care the children sent from our Union are much indebted, have also taken out parties every spring. Mr Wallace has visited the Unions, and has himself selected the children.

Many of these children have of course been thoroughly absorbed into the population of the country, and many are married and bringing up families. That there are openings for these children is proved by the fact that in some cases the parties of lads have been applied for by employers in a colony five or six times over, and that girls are even more warmly welcomed, and by the many inquiries made at the Receiving Homes for young children for adoption.

Perhaps it may be asked why should there be this demand. The Hon. Mrs Joyce, who, had she been well enough, would have written this paper in my place, and who visited Canada both in 1884 and 1890, thus explains the matter. "First," she says, "Canadian families are very small; I believe the average would be three against five in the old country. Secondly, Canadians marry very young, the sons and daughters follow suit, and at the age of forty-five, heads of families find their own children settling in life for themselves. They shrink from the loneliness of having no young life around them, they are well-to-do, hospitable and genial, and as they say, want some young thing about them to love."

Unfortunately, in 1897, the Labour Party in Canada made up their mind to stop the work, and a Bill was passed which threw great difficulty in the way of sending out the children, so much so that only 85 went at the expense of the rates during that year.



The Church of England Waifs and Strays have, through the representations of their Society to the authorities in Canada, obtained some concessions with respect to this Act, which are stated in a letter written by their Secretary to the *Times*, on November 17th.

And now I come to my third point, who to send, and how to fit them to go out. It is most important that all children selected for emigration should be healthy in mind and body, honest and well conducted, and that they should, if possible, have had some training before they start which will fit them for colonial life. It is much better not to send them straight from the Workhouse, but to let them be trained before starting in one of the Homes for the purpose in England, or if this is not done, they should be placed for a time in a Canadian Receiving Home, where they will get accustomed to the ways of the new country. For children from a Workhouse, albeit they are trained in habits of obedience and order and cleanliness, are apt to be very wanting in general all-round usefulness; they have never nursed the baby, or gone shopping for mother, or made the fire, or swept the house, and they are likely in a fresh place, with many fresh things around them, to sit and look dull and stupefied; indeed they are often absolutely frightened at not having companions with them, who do everything in a row.

Some knowledge of country life and country things is also most valuable. A lady who helps Mr and Mrs Wallace in their work in Ontario, said at a meeting at which I was present this year, that a town boy of fifteen who was sent to bring up the cows, only knew what the drovers do when they drive the cattle to market, so he took a stick and beat them, thereby earning a character for cruelty, and making at once an unfavourable impression.

The best plan of preparing a child for emigration

is to send it to one of the Certified Homes, which have for their object the training of children for colonial life. Chichester House, at Hurstpierpoint, is a Training Home exclusively for Workhouse girls. The Society for Waifs and Strays has its Homes for training in England, and also its distributing Homes in Canada. Dr Barnardo, Mr Fegan, Dr Stephenson, all train specially for emigration, and have Receiving Homes in Canada. Dr Barnardo has three such Homes, one for boys at Toronto, one for girls at Peterboro, Ontario, and one for older lads in Manitoba.

Mr and Mrs Bilborough Wallace receive and distribute children from their Home at Belleville, Ontario, and send home regular reports of their progress. Other societies, and philanthropic persons interested in the work, have many organisations of a like kind by which children are sent out, carefully looked after and regularly reported.

But the great point, and it must be repeated again, is that the children sent should be in good health physically and mentally, and should be honest and industrious and virtuous. The Canadians are a sober, moral, and religious people, and they do not want children of low ways and vicious habits sent amongst them; besides it would be very unsound policy on our part to trust the building up of our Colonial Empire to failures.

Let us turn to results, and for these we must take the opinions of some of the most experienced workers in child emigration. Miss Rye, in a recent letter on the subject, writes as follows:—"After a work has held its own for nearly thirty years, it scarcely appears necessary to advocate its necessity. No human work is perfect, but I know of no other work that can compare with the emigration of poor children to Canada." And then she gives instances of the success and prosperity of some of her girls and boys. Mr Bilborough

Wallace's agent reports that the pleasantest part of her work is visiting her girls, now married, in their own homes. She says: "Many have married farmers, tradesmen, one a fruit-grower, another a professor of agriculture, another an organ-builder; and many of these left in England, even if they had kept virtuous, which is next to impossible, would have dragged on a miserable existence in our slums." "It is," she continues, "impossible to exaggerate the benefits and advantages of a free country life to children removed from our crowded neighbourhoods. Food is very cheap and therefore plentiful in Canada; even the poor people in towns have plenty of food, and there is no temptation to drink. In all my visiting I have never seen or heard of intoxicating liquor being used as a beverage or drunk to excess, and a drunken woman is almost unknown. During the last eight years we have sent out 735 children, ranging from five to eighteen years old; 237 of these are girls, and the number of failures is not more than 4 per cent. Some of the boys have attained very honourable positions as storekeepers, ministers, land surveyors, and farmers."

Mr and Mrs Bilborough Wallace have taken out since 1892 thirteen children from the New Winchester Union, and the reports of them are very satisfactory. One lad is mentioned as spending his money foolishly but otherwise doing well; and all seem to be hard-working and industrious. One is earning \$8 a month, another \$4. One little fellow is reported to have grown four and a half inches since he went out; and another child, a girl, is adopted.

Dr Barnardo claims for his children that the percentage of conviction for crime is one-seventh of one per cent., and that the calculation of 1.87 per cent. covers all classes of failures. He is also proud to record that his child emigrants have sent back to him since they began to be wage-earners, within the last six years, the sum of £4,811.



Mr Fegan, the Boys' Home, Southwark, states that he has about 1,400 boys placed out in happy openings in life, many young ones adopted by well-to-do people, several older ones already established in their own homesteads, acquired in a few years by their own industry and thrift—the great bulk, however, steadily and honourably working their way rung by rung up the ladder of life; but perhaps the most satisfactory as well as the most practical test of success lies in the fact that seventy-six of his lads have gladly, and of their own free-will, sent back £10 each to bring out a comrade to Canada—a fact which demonstrates, not only their monetary success, for in England but few boys would have the chance to lay by that amount, but also their moral well-doing.

The children emigrated through the United British Women's Emigration Association from Chichester House have an excellent record. They are all Workhouse children, and have gone to the North-West of Canada. One report says: "They are the best girls we have ever had, best both for manners and clothes." The boys sent through this Association have also been well placed and have got on. Two have come back to visit the old country, one to fetch out his brother, whose expenses he paid. Both were most intelligent, respectable young fellows, self-reliant and sober, attending church and Sunday-school, and not ashamed of doing it.

Such are some of the results, and they could be multiplied over and over again, of transporting these children from want and misery and evil to more hopeful and happier conditions in our great colony across the Atlantic. But they are, so to speak, the results apparent to any one. There are others, deeper and far more widely reaching, which must not be lost sight of. Canada is the most law-abiding, the most loyal, the most imperial of all our colonies; she alone has offered to the mother country a preferential tariff for

her commerce ; she alone holds the Queen's highway to the East from ocean to ocean ; she is one of the greatest granaries of the world ; she bids fair to become its greatest gold-producer. How much of her loyalty and patriotism may be due to the influence of those children whom we have sent out, and who have grown up, many of them, to be an integral part of the life of the country, cannot perhaps be wholly calculated, but the national value of strengthening her population in a way that does not disturb her labour market can scarcely be over-estimated.

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### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think they should look at this matter as a means of getting rid of children, but ask whether they would not be better away from the surroundings which encircled them in England. He had visited homes in Canada where there were both boys and girls, and he found that the heads of families were hard-headed Scotch Presbyterians whose idea was not to receive them as servants, but rather to adopt them. With them it was "our girl" or "our boy," as the case might be. It was his pleasure to meet with men who had been emigrated, but not by any society. One boy he had met in London as a man, who before he emigrated used to gaze up at Westminster Abbey in his corduroy breeches. He had prospered : he had a beautiful residence, and was a Justice of the Peace. With respect to another, he had reached the top rung of the ladder, and had earned his right to be called "Honourable." They heard of failures, he knew, but they were not to judge of the want of success by the number of failures, for they knew that the successes were far greater than the failures.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr W. Vallance, a selected speaker.

Mr VALLANCE, Clerk to the Whitechapel Union, said—I have been invited, as a Poor Law official, to open the discussion upon Miss Bromfield's paper, presumably that emphasis may be given to practical points in relation to child emigration as they present themselves from a strictly Poor Law standpoint. There is, however, the less necessity for this, since, in the very interesting paper to which we have listened, Miss Bromfield has covered the entire field as completely as the limit of time assigned to her has admitted ; and further that Miss Bromfield has spoken more in her capacity of a Guardian of the New Winchester Union than in that of Honorary Secretary to the United British Women's Emigration Association. At the same time, Miss Bromfield will forgive me if I say that, in

her enthusiasm for "emigration" as a means of providing for the future of Poor Law children, she has—unintentionally, no doubt—done an injustice to other departments of Poor Law effort on behalf of the young. I cannot accept the statement—oft repeated, but none the less devoid of foundation—that "when such children grow up in England, a large number come back to the Workhouse, especially amongst our girls"; nor do I share the fear expressed by Miss Bromfield that "far more than 5 per cent. of our boys drift back into our casual wards as tramps." On the other hand, I cannot help feeling that Miss Bromfield has adopted too sanguine a position in affirming that it "is proved by the record that failure among these children when emigrated is rather under 5 per cent." Those who have had largest experience in dealing with pauper children know that it is not always the "ideal" systems which are the most successful, and that many of our much-abused institutions have been fruitful of excellent results. In saying this, I am not closing my eyes to the immense advantages of emigration—of transplanting many of our dependent children into colonial soil, amid surroundings which are contributory to the development of character, and to the achievement of manly independence and womanly qualities. We shall all, I am sure, be ready to admit that the emigration of children has, in the main, been hitherto wisely directed and honestly supervised, and that the efforts of devoted men and women have resulted in the rescue of large numbers of poor children from a life of dependence and worse in England. We admit this, and from the standpoint of our experience we can see that, by careful organisation and more protective arrangements in the future, "emigration" opens up unbounded possibilities. But, as I have said, we must be careful not to paint our picture in such glowing colours as to blind us to the fact that "emigration," in common with every other system of dealing with children, is not without its lessons and failures; and that the success of its future depends mainly, if not entirely, upon the efficient adaptation of its machinery to the great purpose of providing a future for the little ones, and upon the intelligence and devotion of those who may be engaged in the work. If "boarding-out" in England demands all the safeguards contained in the "Boarding-out Order," much more is it necessary—without discouraging effort, without unduly trammelling the work of those who are engaged on behalf of the children—that every possible measure of protection should be taken against the risk of abuse. Now, the present time seems specially opportune for taking stock of our position in relation to this question. Notwithstanding that the Dominion Government have for several years co-operated with the home authorities in the matter of the inspection of the children, it has been found that the undertaking did not extend to more than one inspection of a child at the end of the first year after being placed out; and this has long been felt by Boards of Guardians to be lamentably insufficient. As the Local Government Board observed in their reference to Mr Doyle's



famous report—"The report appears to us to show that if the emigration of children to Canada is to be continued, it should be placed under systematic superintendence and control, not only as regards the arrangements for the voyage to Canada, and for the due care of the children on landing there, but also for securing proper inquiries as to their subsequent destination, and a regular superintendence of them when placed out in service or taken into the houses of Canadian settlers." This "regular superintendence" of the children when placed out is the crux of the question; and as it is now made the subject of special arrangements by the Dominion Government and of legislative enactment in the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, I cannot perhaps do better than emphasise Miss Bromfield's references to the Act which has been passed by the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to regulate the immigration into that province of certain classes of children. At first sight the provisions of this Act may appear to present insuperable obstacles to the emigration of children; but I venture to think that, upon mature consideration, what appears at first to be a hindrance will be regarded as of great assistance to Boards of Guardians in carrying out in the future the work of emigration. The assurance which this latest Canadian legislation affords that the persons to be entrusted with the children have a recognised status, and that the children themselves will be continuously under legal superintendence and control, Boards of Guardians will have the less occasion to hesitate to avail themselves of so redemptive a system. In the first place, it is to be observed that the society or agent to be entrusted with children can only act with the direct authority of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, and that they will carry out their work subject to his official control. As regards their operations in Ontario, they will be subject to the inspection and supervision of an Inspector appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor; this inspection being at least once every three months, and the reports of the Inspector upon "the work of every such society or agent" being made to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The society or agent will also be under strict regulation to keep careful records; to maintain careful supervision over every child, until he or she shall attain the age of eighteen years (the society or agent being for the protection of the person and earnings of the child placed *in loco parentis*); to cause a personal visit by a specially appointed agent to be made to each child at least once a year, up to the age of eighteen years; to provide a permanent Home or Shelter to which an emigrated child may be returned, if the foster-parent should be unable or unwilling to retain it; to repay to the municipality the cost of maintenance in the event of the child becoming chargeable to public funds within three years; and to take all necessary steps, under the direction of the Inspector, to protect a child from ill-treatment or neglect. These are statutory provisions of fundamental importance, and it will be interesting if, in her reply upon the discussion, Miss

Bromfield will favour the Conference with her opinion whether existing societies and agents will be prepared to continue the work under these stringent conditions, and if so, upon what terms. Later still than the legislation to which I have referred is an arrangement under which the Canadian Minister of the Interior has undertaken to provide for the inspection annually of all emigrated children throughout the Dominion, provided that payment be made to cover the cost, over and above the first year, which will continue to be borne by the Dominion Government. This payment will be according to the age of each child, ranging from £1. 4s. 8d. for a child of fourteen and under fifteen to £10. 14s. 9d. for a child of four and under five. Reports of the result of these inspections will be communicated to the Guardians as received by the Local Government Board. We find also that, under the Ontario Act, there are legal obligations, enforceable by penalty, upon the foster-parent of an emigrated child to give the fullest information to the society or agent in regard to its health, conduct, progress, and welfare; to return the child safely, at his own expense, to the Home or Shelter specified in the agreement, in the event of his being unable or unwilling to keep it; and to notify the society or agent in case of the child running away, and to give all reasonable assistance in recovering the child and returning it to the guardianship of the society or agent. If there should be a cause for the return of a child to the Home or Shelter, such as an act of immorality or serious misconduct, the society or agent will be bound, under penalty, to state to any future foster-parent the true ascertained cause of such return. As Poor Law Guardians and Officers we are also specially interested in the conditions which will in future prevail as regards the examination of children before leaving Britain. The Examiner appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council is required to satisfy himself by personal examination and otherwise that the child named in his certificate has not been convicted of any crime or misdemeanour, or displayed criminal or vicious tendencies, and is in other respects a child who may lawfully be emigrated to the province. A society or agent is also liable to a penalty of £20 if they emigrate any child "who has been reared, or who has resided amongst habitual criminals, or whose parents have been habitual criminals, lunatics or idiots, or weak-minded, or defective constitutionally, or confirmed paupers, or diseased." It is satisfactory, however, to find from a letter addressed by the Lieutenant-Governor to Mr Rudolph, Secretary of the "Waifs and Strays" Society, that this section will be interpreted liberally, and that "a great deal must be left to the good judgment of those selecting the children for emigration." With regard to the limitation of age of the children emigrated, the Local Government Board have laid down the rule that girls should not be sent out over ten years of age, and in no case except under special circumstances over twelve. This rule is, I venture to think, already appreciated by Guardians, as it enables the child the more readily to adapt itself to its new life



than would be the case later when their habits have become fixed and ties formed, whilst at the earlier age of the child there is greater hope that the foster-parents will attach themselves and not be influenced by any prospect of securing the child's services. I have made these references to statute law and departmental rule, deeming it of the first importance that the Conference should have clearly before it the conditions under which the emigration of children must in future be carried out. But I now come to a point which I venture to think deserves special consideration. It is that of the emigration of children direct from Poor Law establishments. However valuable may be the industrial, mental, and moral training which children there receive—superior, possibly, to that given in most philanthropic institutions—I yet cannot help feeling that it would be an enormous advantage to the children if they could for say six months be withdrawn from the Poor Law and placed in a well-regulated and appointed “Emigration Training Home.” Still more valuable would it be if such a Home were under the control and guidance of the society or agent who might be chosen to conduct the emigration. The associations of such a Home, the adaptation of its work and occupations to the special end in view, the very pictures, and indeed the whole atmosphere, would tend to quicken perceptions and excite an expectation which would be very helpful. Such an arrangement would, moreover, afford those about to accept legal responsibility, opportunities for observation of the character and tendencies of the children about to be entrusted to them. There would probably be no difficulty in such an “Emigration Training Home” obtaining certification under the 25 & 26 Vict., cap. 43, in order to enable Guardians to send children thereto, and to pay for their maintenance during their probationary stay. Need I say more? I think the Conference will be ready to express general agreement in the proposition that, in a carefully organised system of emigration, there is an assured future for many of our poor dependent children; and that with the network of protection which has been indicated—especially such as may be sent to the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba—there is encouragement to hope that Boards of Guardians will be increasingly ready to assist in introducing by its means hope and possibility into thousands of young lives.

Mr B. G. BERRY (Faversham) wished to express his thorough enjoyment of the papers. He did not know what the working of some of the agencies might be, but he knew of the working of one of them. The President had on the previous day spoken about how greatly he deprecated the keeping of helpless children in their Workhouses. Miss Bromfield had told them that some official came over in connection with one of these agencies and made his own selection of children. That was all very nice, but they could do with these selected ones in their own country. What about mistresses who could not get servants? If Canada came and took the best of the flock, what were they to do with the rest? There should be a.



middle course of training between the Workhouse and the happier land beyond the sea : there should be more Home life for the children before they went out, whether in England or elsewhere. 'They would then have a better chance of getting on.

Mr WM. CROUCHER (Farnham) congratulated Miss Bromfield upon her paper. There were some noble ideas in that paper. If they could send out the children to that grand and noble country they should do so. He thought they had too many in England, and why not then remove as many as possible? Then they would have room for more. They should remove them from the bad influences that surrounded them in England, and they would be better in Canada.

Mr HUGGINS (Reading) said that he was only a young officer in the Poor Law. He was a native of Canada, and he would urge the Guardians to send Canada the best of the children. They had sent away some sixty children from Reading Union, and the percentage of successes from reports they had had was very large, and this with regard to girls especially. With regard to the safeguards that had recently been passed, the Rev. Mr Wallace reported every year until the children reached sixteen years of age, though he was only bound to do so once. Under these new regulations Guardians could well emigrate their children to Canada.

Mrs PERCY CACKETT (Wandsworth) said that though she might appear to be speaking against emigration, she was nevertheless in favour of it. It was necessary that the children should be visited. She did not believe, in spite of all the fairy stories, that the people to whom the children went in Canada were very different from those in England. The Canadian Government insisted upon the children being sent out as paupers ; they insisted also on getting the best. She thought they had a better chance of getting better children than Dr Barnardo had. She protested against sending out children under their care on such conditions, that they took a lower place in life than the children of the streets picked up by Dr Barnardo and other people.

Miss W. BRODIE HALL (Eastbourne) said she had a personal knowledge of Canada. She was a delegate from a Board that had successfully emigrated children. Dr Barnardo, whose children might or might not be of a lower class than Workhouse children, never emigrated them until they were a year in a Training Home. He also had Receiving Homes in Canada, and if a child failed in one place it was handed back. There were three things which should be observed if they were to be successful. Most assuredly they should not send out bad children. The Colonies could not deal with the riff-raff of the children as they could in England. For the sake of England herself the children sent out should be of the very best. There were some children who would become social failures in England who would become successful under other circumstances of life. She related an anecdote of one boy who went away, and whom she met as

a man during the Queen's Jubilee in England. He told her that he had over 500 dollars in bank, and was about to be married. He was now married, and he had still 350 dollars in bank. Another boy whom she had afterwards met told her that his master had three nice daughters, but that he gave them a wide berth, as they did not love the Queen—they were Radicals. She presented him with a copy of a life of Her Majesty, and now he reported that the girls were converted.

Mr WM. CROOKS (Poplar) said that they couldn't show a single failure in England if they had the pick of the children. A man had explained to him why all Scotchmen were strong by remarking that the weather was so keen that all the weak ones died. It was a shame that the children were sent to Canada as Poor Law children and paupers, and people were not so anxious to take them as they were the children sent out by some charity. This Conference should say that they would have no such classification as Charity *v.* Pauper. If the youngsters who are wanted for Canada want to go, let them go; if not, they would do as well in this country.

Miss DESPARD (Lambeth) did not disbelieve in emigration in individual cases, but it should be carefully done. If they found more and more the necessity of the most careful supervision of the children that were boarded out in their own country, was it not even more necessary in a foreign country. Both for those who were to remain and those who were to be emigrated there should be something between the Workhouse and the work to which they were to be sent. In a Catholic school which she recently visited one of the girls who had got too old for the school was to be sent out to service. She had done some of the most beautiful needlework which she (the speaker) had ever seen. The good Mother of the school asked was it not a pity that girls like this should have to be sent to service. But there was no intermediate Home to which these girls could be sent, and so there was no other alternative for girls of talent. It was not every girl that is born to be a servant.

Miss LIDGETT (St Pancras) said that in her Board during the autumn months a very careful selection of boys under fourteen was made, and they were asked if they would like to go to Canada. At about that time an address on Canada, illustrated with views, was given, and the boys often asked to be allowed to go. Occasionally their little sisters had been allowed to go with them. The next six months was spent in preparing their minds for the change. Occasionally they had sent children whose parents had suffered from insanity, but now the Canadian Government will not take the risk of these children any more. She could only remember two children having been returned; one was sent back insane, and the other was suddenly returned as a thief. They ought to choose good stuff. They had annual returns made, but she would have been glad to have received a little more definite reports of the children. They should not forget those children whilst they remained Guardians, and they should follow with interest those moral and social experiments.



Mr JESSE HAWKES (Malling) could not help noticing that the economic question had turned up again. He ventured to suggest that the general question of economics in relation to the Poor Law should be a subject for discussion next year. In all their work as Poor Law Guardians they should apply the same principles as if it were their own business. As a representative of a Board that had not many boys to put out, he hoped they should have the necessary information to assure them that any boys they might send out as emigrants would have adequate inspection.

Miss BAKER (Holborn) said she was exceedingly sorry for some of the things which she had heard about emigration that day. She had sent many who would have been likely to have been failures in England, but were successes abroad. She met a man one day who said to her that he was a boy called Davis, and one of the first which she had emigrated. He had a comfortable home, and he had only come back for a short while to see his friends. One difficulty in the emigrating of children was having to go before a magistrate to say that they were willing to go. If a lad of ten said he did not want to go they could not send him, and it sometimes happened that the children were willing to go, but an aunt or an uncle who had discarded them for years sent the child a letter to say No.

Mr CHANCE said that he had learned a great deal from the paper. He had not heard anything said about the practice of advertising when they were going to emigrate certain children, which often brought to light relations who could perfectly well look after them. He had been given to understand that it was a regular practice in the case of one Board to advertise that certain children would be emigrated for the sake merely of discovering their relations. If this was so, it was wrong; and the practice would not be effective, for people would soon come to know that there was no real intention of emigrating the children, and so would not come forward to relieve the Guardians of the charge of them. As to the imperial idea, if they carried that too far, England might eventually become a field for emigration for Canada. They should be extremely careful about the circumstances of each case.

Miss BROMFIELD, who was accorded a hearty vote of thanks for her paper, then briefly replied. Speakers had said keep the children in England where they were wanted. Were they to do the best for the children or not? If they sent them out of England they did do the best for them. Children that were adopted in Canada were adopted for love, whilst those in England were adopted for money.

### THE ASSOCIATION FOR BEFRIENDING BOYS.

Rev. BROOKE LAMBERT (Greenwich) then brought to the notice of the Conference the attempt which is being made to organise for the boys of the Metropolitan Poor Law Schools a system of after-care



similar to that which has worked so well in the interests of the girls. Having had for many years to do with the Society which had to do with girls, it occurred to him that something ought to be done for the boys. The boys on leaving the schools ought to be looked after. He had arranged a system of visitation of boys from the Sutton Schools. About 800 boys every year go out of the schools of the Metropolis. What they wanted was some guarantee that all of them would have a chance of doing well. He thought that of the 600 children from the Sutton Schools who had passed through his hands in five years the proportion who had returned to the Poor Law was about one per cent. He was bound to say that there were cases of difficulty, but it was the fault of the boy himself. It was pleasant to see how ready these boys were to help one another. It was proposed that there should be a central office in which all boys sent out to work should have their names recorded. Then there would be branch secretaries in every Poor Law district of the Metropolis. The constitution of the Society would be roughly as follows :—The branch secretaries in the thirty Poor Law Unions in the Metropolis and the Boards of Guardians who co-operated should be represented by one member, and there should be about twenty other members. In answer to several questions the rev. gentleman said that the boys would be visited until they were twenty years of age. As to what they would do with the boys between situations, the Society was not yet constituted, so he could not go into these details, but there was not the same danger with boys as with girls. As to whether the scheme would only extend to the Metropolitan Poor Law Schools, he replied that for the present they would only deal with London, but he expected the work would be extended.

Mr Brooke Lambert's statement was listened to with much attention.

The proceedings of the Conference then closed with the usual votes of thanks.



## Annual Central Conference.

# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TWENTY - SEVENTH ANNUAL CENTRAL POOR LAW  
CONFERENCE, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF  
THE GUILDHALL, IN THE CITY OF LONDON, ON  
THE 16TH AND 17TH FEBRUARY 1899.

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PRESIDENT—THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL  
BEAUCHAMP, K.C.M.G.

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The following Unions were represented at the Conference, Unions marked with an asterisk being represented by Guardians and not by Delegates :—

### METROPOLITAN DIVISION.

(30 Unions.)

#### BETHNAL GREEN—

Bedford, J. (Vice-Chairman).  
James, Miss M. E. E.  
Webster, W. J. (Chairman).

#### FULHAM—

Lawson, P.  
Pascall, C.

#### GREENWICH—

Boness, W. T.  
Watson, Mrs.

#### HACKNEY—

Fenton-Jones, J. (Chairman).  
Howlett, Rev. T. E.  
Jackson, Rev. H. L.  
Lampard, G.

#### HAMPSTEAD—

Baily, H.  
Preston, H. W. (Clerk).  
Rider, W. R.  
Viner, Miss F.

#### HOLBORN—

Baker, Miss I. M.  
Hill, H. O. (Clerk).  
Walton, J.

#### KENSINGTON—

Edgcombe, E. F. S. (Chairman).  
Warner, Mrs.  
Webb, Col. R. F.

#### LAMBETH—

Andrews, Capt. C. W.  
Dunn-Gardner, Mrs.

#### LEWISHAM—

Huggett, A.  
Keech, R.  
Matthias, J. J.  
Penfold, P.

#### MILE-END OLD TOWN—

Brown, J. (Chairman).  
Hallam, Rev. C.

#### PADDINGTON—

Humphrey, Miss H. M.  
Huntley, Col. H. C.



## POPLAR—

Crooks, W. (L.C.C.).  
Lansbury, G.  
Smith, J. R.

## ST GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST—

Cowie, Miss.

## ST MARY, ISLINGTON—

Clarke, Miss.  
Williams, J. W.

## ST OLAVES—

Ecroyd, W. H.  
Simmons, Miss M.

## ST SAVIOUR'S—

Stead, Mrs B.

## SHOREDITCH—

Birkett, Geo.  
Errington, T.

## STEPNEY—

East, Mrs.  
Mitchell, W. H.  
O'Connor, J.

## STRAND—

Evans, Mrs M. M.  
Hallinan, J. T.  
Maddocks, A. H. (Clerk).  
Painton, Miss M.

## WANDSWORTH AND CLAPHAM.

Brooks, R. H.  
Cackett, Mrs A. F.  
Milligan, D. (Chairman).

## WHITECHAPEL—

Hand, Rev. J. E.  
Murphy, Rev. P. J.  
Vallance, W. (Clerk).

## WOOLWICH—

Harbour, Mrs.

## SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION.

(98 Unions.)

## BERKS (12 Unions).

## BRADFIELD—

Simmons, R. (Clerk).  
Willink, H. G. (Chairman).

## EASTHAMPSSTEAD—

Osborn, Mrs.

## HUNGERFORD AND RAMSBURY—

Morrice, Captain G. S.

## MAIDENHEAD—

Stone, J. W.  
Walker, J. W. (Chairman).  
Young, Lady.

## WALLINGFORD—

Brown, Rev. J.  
King, J. P. (Chairman).  
Latham, T.

## HANTS (26 Unions).

## ALVERSTOKE—

Field, W. O. (Clerk).  
Le Boutillier, Mrs.  
Tanner, C. (Chairman).

## ALTON—

Wood, J. G. (Chairman).

## DROXFORD—

Westbrook, R.

## HARTLEY WINTNEY—

Hitchcock, A.  
Johnson, J. L.  
Martineau, J.

## PORTSEA ISLAND—

Bishop, J. (Chairman).  
Mitchell, E. H. (Clerk).  
Ward, W.

## SOUTHAMPTON—

Gwillim, D. P. (Clerk).  
Thomas, C. G. (Chairman).

## SOUTH STONEHAM—

Garcia, C. H.  
Martin, J.

## KENT (26 Unions).

## BLEAN—

Burch, J. E.  
Farley, G.  
Foxell, Rev. W. J.

## CANTERBURY—

Plummer, J. (Clerk).  
Stone, H. J.  
Stone, J. G. B.

## DOVER—

Pepper, M. (Chairman).

EASTRY—

Cloke, F. S. (Clerk).  
Long, W. E.

GRAVESEND AND MILTON—

King, W. J. (Clerk).

ISLE OF THANET—

Hermitage, J. J.

MEDWAY—

Delacour, G. H.  
Lamb, T. C.  
Norman, A. Reynolds (Clerk).  
Sinclair, A.  
Stigant, A. (Chairman).  
Yates, D. W.

SEVENOAKS—

Escombe, Miss.  
Few, Rev. C. E. (Chairman).  
Hickmott, Mrs.

SURREY (11 Unions).

CROYDON—

List, H. (Clerk).  
Shirley, G. J. (Chairman).  
Trythall, J. A.  
Williams, J.

DORKING—

Calvert, Colonel.  
Jeal, W.  
Ponting, H. E.

EPSOM—

Brown, W. S. J.  
Reader, W. O. (Clerk).  
Shaw, Rev. J.

FARNHAM—

Mangles, Miss.  
Pain, Mrs.

GODSTONE—

Skerry, G. E.  
Thomas, Dr.

HAMBLEDON—

Borrowman, J.  
Parson, A. G.

KINGSTON—

Brown, Mrs P.  
Gossett, J. J. (Vice-Chairman).

RICHMOND—

Hendy, Colonel.

SUSSEX (23 Unions).

\*BATTLE—

Egerton, Miss G. R.

CUCKFIELD—

Weekes, A.

EASTBOURNE—

Bradford, B.  
Crake, Rev. E. E.

EAST PRESTON—

Beer, G.  
Cortis, G.  
Snow, A. D.

HORSHAM—

Hamilton, Gen. Sir W. Stirling, Bart.

SOUTH MIDLAND DIVISION.

(65 Unions.)

BEDFORDSHIRE (6 Unions).

BEDFORD—

Fleming, H.  
Grafton, Mrs.  
Harding, J. (Chairman).  
Hipwell, W.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD—

Elliott, D.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE (7 Unions).

AMERSHAM—

Fisher, G. O.  
Lowndes, W. (Chairman).  
Robinson, G. J.

AYLESBURY—

Locke, R. W.  
Mackrill, E. T. (Chairman).

BUCKINGHAM—

Verney, Sir Edmund, Bart.

ETON—

Carver, W. R.  
Darvill, H. L.  
Taylor, J.

WYCOMBE—

Reynolds, B. L. (Clerk).  
Thompson, Rev. A. S.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE (9 Unions).

\*CAXTON AND ARRINGTON—

Sperling, A.

HERTFORDSHIRE (12 Unions)

BISHOP STORTFORD—

Barnard, E. B.  
Wetherall, Mrs.

## HEMEL HEMPSTEAD—

Balderson, H. (Vice-Chairman).  
Longman, A. H. (Chairman).

## ST ALBANS—

Taylor, Rev. H. W.

## WARE—

Miller, W.  
Monro, Rev. R. D.

## WATFORD—

Ellis, —.  
Smith, W. L.  
Spufford, —.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE (3 Unions).

## HUNTINGDON—

Jackson, Rev. H. L.

MIDDLESEX (7 Unions).

## BRENTFORD—

Bentfield, C. G.  
Clark, Colonel.  
Stephens, W. F. (Clerk).

## EDMONTON—

Ball, G.  
Beasley, Mrs.  
Pollard, Mrs A. L.  
Short, Mrs.

## HENDON—

Gunns, Mrs.  
Smart, Mrs.

## UXBRIDGE—

Edmundson, Rev. G.  
Hilton, Rev. A. D. (Vice-Chairman).  
Woodbridge, C. (Clerk).

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (12 Unions).

## BRIXWORTH—

Bury, Rev. Canon.  
Calverley, Mrs.  
Cox, Rev. Dr (Chairman).  
Page, G. (Vice-Chairman).  
Pell, Albert.  
Woodford, W. C. (Clerk).

## KETTERING—

Barlow, C.  
Gates, Rev. E.

## NORTHAMPTON—

Fawkes, W. (Clerk).  
Portsons, J.  
Spokes, W. B.  
Tonsley, J.

## PETERBOROUGH—

Little, H. (Chairman).  
Pettit, W. (Clerk).

## POTTERSBUURY—

Hall, A.  
Perrin, Mrs.

## WELLINGBOROUGH—

Richards, Rev. T.

OXFORDSHIRE (9 Unions)

## HENLEY—

Hart-Davis, Rev. R. H.  
Watts, J.

## OXFORD—

Ballard, A.  
Filsell, J. T.  
Salter, J. E.

EASTERN DIVISION.

(55 Unions.)

ESSEX (16 Unions).

## BRAINTREE—

Dockwra, Miss L.

## CHELMSFORD—

Algar, R. J. (Vice-Chairman).  
Barnard, Rev. M. R.

## DUNMOW—

Capel, Rev. H. B.  
Lowndes, G. A.  
Snell, F. J. (Clerk).

## HALSTEAD—

Goodchild, T.  
Hughes, R. L. (Clerk).  
Worden, Miss L.

## ORSETT—

Brooks, Mrs A.  
Crawley, Rev. R. T. (Vice-Chairman).  
Squier, S. W. (Chairman).

## WEST HAM—

Duncan, Miss E. C.  
Kerrison, Miss E. B.  
Tarrant, R.

NORFOLK (22 Unions).

## BLOFIELD—

Clark, Mrs M. J.

## ERPINGHAM—

Buxton, Miss A. C.

## NORWICH—

Crotch, F. J. (Vice-Chairman).  
Lucas, R. G.  
Mallett, R. J.  
Woodward, E. R. (Clerk).



## SUFFOLK (17 Unions).

## BOSMERE AND CLAYDON—

Gooding, S. (Clerk).

Roe, E.

## COSFORD—

Newman, A. (Clerk).

Scott, Rev. Canon.

## HOXNE—

French, Rev. F.

## IPSWICH—

Fisk, G.

Fulcher, A.

Vulliamy, A. F. (Clerk).

## SAMFORD—

Hocking, Rev. J. H. (Chairman).

Thwaites, T.

## SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

(79 Unions.)

## CORNWALL (14 Unions).

## CAMELFORD—

Greenwood, T. (Vice-Chairman).

## LISKEARD—

Isaac, J. C.

## ST GERMANS—

Tamblyn, W.

## STRATTON—

Stacey, P.

Treleven, J. H.

## DEVONSHIRE (20 Unions).

## DEVONPORT—

Palmer, Rev. C. J.

Vanstone, F.

## OKEHAMPTON—

White-Thomson, Col. Sir R.

## TAVISTOCK—

Spear, A. (Chairman).

## TOTNES—

Windeatt, T. W. (Clerk).

## DORSETSHIRE (12 Unions).

## \*BLANDFORD—

Baker, Rev. Sir T.

## WIMBORNE AND CRANBORNE—

Pike, S. T.

## SOMERSETSHIRE (17 Unions).

## BRIDGWATER—

Barham, A. G. (Chairman).

## KEYNSHAM—

Collingdon, Mrs.

Gibbs, W. G.

Hurle, J. C. (Chairman).

Martin, C. (Clerk).

## WARMLEY (Out-relief)—

Nurse, R. F. (Chairman).

Williams, S. (Clerk).

## WELLS—

Goodhall, S. F.

Russ, A. G. (Clerk).

## YEOVIL—

Harbin, Col.

## WILTSHIRE (17 Unions).

## \*CALNE—

Herbert-Smith, Mrs H.

## CHIPPENHAM—

Clutterbuck, E. H. (Chairman).

Fuller, Mrs.

Napier, H. B.

Small, W.

## CRICKLADE AND WOOTTON BASSETT—

Bevir, H. (Clerk).

Sadler, J. (Chairman).

White, H.

## DEVIZES—

Caird, R. F.

Watson-Taylor, J.

## HIGHWORTH AND SWINDON—

Phelps, S. J.

Raggett, H. (Vice-Chairman).

## SALISBURY—

Hammick, W. M.

Harding, R. C. (Chairman).

Hodding, F. (Clerk).

## WARMINSTER—

Morgan, W. F. (Chairman).

Pelly, Lady.

## WILTON—

Kendle, G. R.

Macdonald, Rev. F. W.

Wilson, G. M. (Clerk).

## WEST MIDLAND DIVISION.

(81 Unions.)

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE (17 Unions).

## BRISTOL—

Bontflower, C. E. D. (Vice-Chairman).

Rumsey, Major G. F. (Chairman).

## CIRENCESTER—

Cripps, E. W.

## NORTHLEACH—

Dutton-Bibury, Hon. and Rev. F. G.  
(Chairman).

Eldon, Earl.

## THORNBURY—

Browne, Col. G.

Thurston, H. P. (Clerk).

## WHEATENHURST—

Lloyd-Baker, G. E. (Vice-Chairman).

Prout, G.

Winterbotham, L. D. (Clerk).

HEREFORDSHIRE (8 Unions).

## DORE—

Bellers, Col. R. B.

## HEREFORD—

Ronalds H. (Chairman).

## WEOBLEY—

Davenport, Rev. G. H. (Chairman).

SHROPSHIRE (15 Unions).

## LUDLOW—

Edwards, H. (Vice-Chairman).

STAFFORDSHIRE (17 Unions).

## BURTON-ON-TRENT—

Asken, Rev. J.

Chamberlin, C. F. (Clerk).

## WEST BROMWICH—

Ward, H. (Clerk).

WARWICKSHIRE (14 Unions).

## ASTON—

Cooke, C. C.

Evans, J. (Chairman).

North, J. (Clerk).

## BIRMINGHAM—

Gateley, S. (Chairman).

Forrester, J. H. (Vice-Chairman).

Manton, H. J.

## COVENTRY—

Arch, J. (Clerk).

Dalton, W. E. (Vice-Chairman).

Stevens, H. (Chairman).

## RUGBY—

Chapness, Miss.

Johnson, Mrs E. A.

M'Clure, Miss A.

Mitchison, Rev. R. S.

Pendred, J. W. (Clerk).

Townsend, Dr T. S.

## WARWICK—

Gilbert, W. (Vice-Chairman).

Newdigate, A.

Passman, C. H.

WORCESTERSHIRE (11 Unions).

## EVESHAM—

Bourne, Rev. Canon.

## KIDDERMINSTER—

Hobbs, Capt. (Vice-Chairman).

Manby, C.

## KING'S NORTON—

Davison, E.

Docker, E. (Clerk).

Walton, J.

## PERSHORE—

Davies, Gen.

Feek, Rev. J. H.

## UPTON-UPON-SEVERN—

Long, Col., M.P.

## WORCESTER—

Browne, Mrs E. L.

Knott, A. W. (Clerk).

Stallard, J. V. (Chairman).

Urwick, H.

## NORTH MIDLAND DIVISION.

(45 Unions.)

DERBYSHIRE (9 Unions).

## DERBY—

Potter, J.

Rolfe, Rev. H. R.

LEICESTERSHIRE (11 Unions).

## ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH—

Denton, Rev. Canon (Chairman).

## BARROW-ON-SOAR—

Mayes, S. W.

Scott, J. J. F. (Clerk).

Smith, J. S. (Chairman).

## LEICESTER—

Andrew, A. (Chairman).

Fullager, Miss F. E.

Shaw, S. (Vice-Chairman).

## LUTTERWORTH—

Bannister, A.

Bodycote, T. C. (Clerk).

Stainton, R. W. G.

## MARKET HARBOROUGH—

Bragg, W. B.  
Poultney, Rev. H. W.

## LINCOLNSHIRE (15 Unions).

## LINCOLN—

Danby, W. B. (Clerk).  
Laverack, J. (Chairman).  
Martin, Mrs.

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE (8 Unions).

## BASFORD—

Faulconbridge, W. F. (Vice-Chairman).  
Hanson, R. G. (Chairman).  
Spencer, C. J. (Clerk).

## MANSFIELD—

Blythe, Miss D.  
Hibbert, G. H. (Clerk).  
Manners, Mrs E.  
Skelton, S. W. (Vice-Chairman).

## NOTTINGHAM—

Howard, G. M. (Clerk).  
Palmer, T. (Vice-Chairman).  
Smith, C. (Chairman).

## NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

(42 Unions.)

## CHESHIRE (11 Unions).

## BUCKLOW—

Hignett, Rev. Canon (Chairman).  
Hornby, R.  
Leigh, R. (Clerk).

## RUNCORN—

Ashton, G. F.  
Knowles, J.  
Stokes, J. (Vice-Chairman).

## WIRRAL—

Knowles, W. (Chairman).  
Morris, C. (Vice-Chairman).  
Olive, J. E. S. (Clerk).

## LANCASHIRE (30 Unions).

## BARTON-UPON-IRWELL—

Estcourt, C.  
Rogers, J.  
Whitworth, J. W. (Clerk).

## BLACKBURN—

Ashworth, T.  
Radcliffe, R. C. (Clerk).  
Simpson, R.

## BOLTON—

Cooper, S. (Clerk).  
Hearsley, E. (Vice-Chairman).  
Ward, T.

## BURNLEY—

Horn, J. S. (Clerk).  
Smith, Ald. (Chairman).

## CHORLTON—

Bloomfield, D. S. (Clerk).  
Rhodes, Dr J. M.  
Tomlinson, C. L. (Chairman).

## CLITHEROE—

Benson, T. D.

## LEIGH—

Laycock, J.

## LIVERPOOL—

Hagger, H. J. (Clerk).  
Horrigan, E.  
Thompson, R.

## MANCHESTER—

Boardman, J.  
Macdonald, G. (Clerk).  
M'Dougall, Ald. A.

## PRESCOT—

Brown, F. J. (Chairman).  
Hallas, G. H. (Vice-Chairman).  
Mann, A. F. (Clerk).

## PRESTWICH—

Ogden, E. W. (Clerk).  
Pickvance, J.  
Tweedale, I.  
Whittaker, N.

## ROCHDALE—

Holt, T.  
Leach, R. A. (Clerk).  
Wadsworth, H. (Chairman).

## SALFORD—

Mercer, Mrs.  
Townson, F. (Clerk).  
Willock, Mrs.

## TOXTETH PARK—

Abercrombie, W.  
Killip, R. (Vice-Chairman).  
Moulding, J. (Clerk).  
Mather, R. (Chairman).

## ULVERSTON—

Dean, C. W. (Clerk).  
Hibbert, Sir J. T., K.C.B.  
Hodgson, J. (Vice-Chairman).



## WARRINGTON—

Edelsten, Mrs J. H.  
Jolley, A. J. (Vice-Chairman).  
Pilling, G. (Chairman).  
Sutton, J. C. (Clerk).

## WEST DERBY—

Cleaver, H. P. (Clerk).  
Cripps, Miss.  
Johnson, Miss.  
Lunt, S. T. (Vice-Chairman).  
Mead, G. L. (Chairman).

## WIGAN—

Ackerley, H. (Clerk).  
Ball, E. (Chairman).  
Ball, W.

## YORKSHIRE DIVISION.

(62 Unions.)

EAST RIDING (10 Unions).

## KINGSTON-UPON-HULL—

Farrell, J. (Vice-Chairman).  
Feldman, H. (Chairman).  
Winter, R. H. (Clerk).

## SCULCOATES—

Askew, F.  
Chatham, J. P. (Clerk).  
Galloway, R. A. (Chairman).

NORTH RIDING (17 Unions).

## LEYBURN—

Burrill, C. J. (Chairman).

## MIDDLESBROUGH—

Alurgill, N.  
Cook, G.  
Dales, J. J. (Clerk).

WEST RIDING (35 Unions).

## BRADFORD—

Cockroft, R.  
Crowther, G. M.  
Parker, W.

## DEWSBURY—

Smith, W. (Chairman).

## HALIFAX—

Turner, H. J. (Chairman).  
Wade, J. (Vice-Chairman).

## HUNSLLET—

Banks, J. (Chairman).  
Hawkyard, Dr (Vice-Chairman).  
Mee, F. W. (Clerk).

## KEIGHLEY—

Arthur, Rev. D.

## LEEDS—

Ford, J. H. (Clerk).  
Lawson, E. E. (Chairman).  
Lister, G.

## NORTH BIERLEY—

Haigh, A. (Vice-Chairman).  
Harper, W. (Chairman).  
Helmsley, J. E. (Clerk).

## PENISTONE—

Neville, Col.

## SHEFFIELD—

Booker, A. E. (Clerk).  
Darby, J.  
Stott, J. C.

## WORTLEY—

Ibbertson, J. P.  
Lomas, W.  
Thomas, J.

## NORTHERN DIVISION.

(39 Unions.)

CUMBERLAND (9 Unions).

## BRAMPTON—

Birkett, G. (Clerk).  
Lamb, J.

DURHAM (15 Unions).

## DARLINGTON—

Feetham, J. (Chairman).  
Leach, C. H. (Clerk).

## DURHAM—

Coward, J. (Chairman).  
Lund, J.

## GATESHEAD—

Affleck, R. (Chairman).  
Craighill, G. (Clerk).  
Steel, Rev. Dr J. (Vice-Chairman).

## SOUTH SHIELDS—

Armstrong, Ald.  
Walton, C. E. (Vice-Chairman).

## STOCKTON—

Bainbridge, T. B.  
Bell, J.  
Watson, F. B. (Clerk).

## SUNDERLAND—

Armstrong, T. (Chairman).  
Attey, J. W.  
Gilbertson, J. J.  
Hodgson, J. W. (Clerk).

NORTHUMBERLAND (12 Unions).  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE—  
Curry, J.  
Gibson, J. W. (Clerk).  
Rodgers, J. H. (Chairman).

WESTMORELAND (3 Unions).  
KENDAL—  
Cropper, Hon. Mrs.

MONMOUTH AND WELSH  
DIVISION. (52 Unions.)

SOUTH WALES (27 Unions).

GLAMORGANSHIRE (8 Unions).

CARDIFF—  
Beavan, F. J.  
Harris, A. J. (Clerk).  
Price, J.

PONTARDAWE—  
Lewis, D. E.  
Player, W. J. P.

SWANSEA—  
Lewis, Rev. Dr J. G. (Chairman).

CARMARTHENSHIRE (4 Unions).  
LLANELLY—  
Nevill, W. Y.  
Seymour, T. (Chairman).

PEMBROKESHIRE (3 Unions).  
NARBETH—  
Buckley, R. H. (Chairman).

CARDIGANSHIRE.  
LAMPETER—  
Evans, H. D.  
Hughes, T. H. R.

NORTH WALES (19 Unions).

DENBIGHSHIRE (4 Unions).  
WREXHAM—  
Griffith-Boscawen, Capt. B. T.  
(Chairman).  
Jones, E. L.

FLINTSHIRE.  
HOLYWELL—  
Evans, J. K. (Vice-Chairman).  
Garner, W.  
Roberts, P. H. (Clerk).

### VISITORS.

Russell, T. W., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Local Government Board.

Bagenal, P. H.	} Local Govern- ment Board Inspectors.
Chapman, Miss F. M.	
Davy, J. S.	
Fleming, Baldwyn.	
Mason, Miss.	
Preston Thomas, H.	
Preston, J. W.	
Stansfield, Miss.	
Stevens, H.	

Strutt, Hon. F.	} Central Committee.
Bousfield, W.	
Grafton, Miss.	
Griffith-Boscawen, Mrs.	
Lascelles, Mrs Eaton.	
Maurice, Dr Blake.	

The following Counties sent no representatives, viz. :—

North Midland Division ...	... Rutlandshire.
Monmouth and Welsh Division...	{ Monmouthshire, Anglesey, Brecknockshire, Carnarvonshire, Merionethshire, Mont- gomeryshire, Radnorshire.

The following Unions paid for Delegates, but appear not to have been represented, viz. :—Bridgend and Cowbridge, Bromley (Kent), Carlisle, Newbury, Newport (Mon.), Risbridge, Strood, Trowbridge and Melksham, Thrapston, Westbury-on-Severn, Wincanton.

[*Note.*—Great pains have been taken to make the above list complete. If the names of any of those present at the Conference are omitted, it is in consequence of the tickets having been either insufficiently or not at all filled in.]

THURSDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY 1899.

IN opening the proceedings, on behalf of the Lord Mayor, Mr ALDERMAN and SHERIFF ALLISON said—I have on behalf of the Lord Mayor to express his great regret that the state of his health has prevented him opening this Conference here this morning. I know he is extremely sorry, and that it would have been a real pleasure to him to have been present at this important gathering. I am happy to say he is greatly improved in health, and will be able to resume his many duties in the course of a few days. May I, in the name of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, welcome you all to this important gathering? The Corporation of the City of London is extremely glad that the Conference is taking place under the roof of the Guildhall, and I trust that your deliberations will be fruitful and tend to the success of the great work we have in hand and so near at heart. May I take this opportunity in the name of all present and of the citizens of London of congratulating Lord Beauchamp upon the great appointment which by the favour of the Sovereign he has so recently received? I only voice your sentiments and those of the people of this Metropolis and of the whole country when I wish him good health and prosperity and success in the great duties he has undertaken. (Cheers.) It now only remains for me again to bid you welcome here and to give place to his Lordship. (Cheers.)

LORD BEAUCHAMP said—I am sure it will be the wish of the Conference, before proceeding to other business, to tender thanks to the Lord Mayor and to his representative, Alderman and Sheriff Allison, for their welcome. The Corporation is foremost in all good works, and we deeply appreciate the welcome they have given us on this occasion. (Cheers.)

Mr W. BOUSFIELD said—I have the honour of seconding the vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor and Corporation and to Alderman and Sheriff Allison. My recollection of the Central Conferences goes back to the time when we had not the permission to use this splendid hall. Except that it is a little small for our growing numbers, it would be impossible to have a better place of meeting, or one that gives greater dignity to the deliberations of the Conference. (Cheers.)

Alderman ALLISON thanked the meeting, and expressed the hope that their discussions on great social and national questions would be most successful and helpful. (Cheers.)

The Earl Beauchamp, who was warmly welcomed, then took the chair.

Mr W. CHANCE, Hon. Sec., stated that letters of regret for their inability to attend the Conference has been received from the following members of the Local Government Board, viz., Mr H. Chaplin, M.P., *President*; Mr Provis, C.B., *Secretary*; Mr W. E. Knollys, C.B., *Assistant Secretary*; Mr Murray-Browne, Mr Jenner-Fust, Mr



Kennedy, Mr Mozley, Mr Byam Davies, Mr Dawson, and Mr Moorsom, *Inspectors*; from Miss Clifford and Mr Fitton, *Members of the Central Committee*; from the Dowager-Marchioness of Lothian, Miss Louisa Twining, Mr C. S. Loch, and Miss Gibson.

Mr CHANCE read the Report of Committee as follows:—

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

District Conferences have been held during the past year in every District except that of South Wales, where the recent coal strike seemed for the time to have thrown the whole administration of the Poor Law into confusion.

Out of twenty-two separate subjects discussed at these Conferences, no fewer than five dealt with the Relief of the Epileptic, Imbecile, and Feeble-minded Classes, four with Nursing in Poor Law Institutions, and three with Vagrancy. These three questions seem to be those which give most trouble to Boards of Guardians at the present time, and each deserves the attention of the Local Government Board as a fit subject for inquiry by Departmental Committees. A resolution passed by the North-Western District Conference asks for an inquiry into the first-mentioned subject, and the Committee still feel it as important as they did four years ago that a thorough and searching examination should be made into the Vagrancy question.

In their last Report the Committee mentioned that they had under consideration the Bill which had been introduced into Parliament for the further protection of children who come under the care of Boards of Guardians. To that Bill they gave their general approval, and were ready, had it attained a second reading, to endeavour to get certain amendments which they considered necessary introduced into it. The Committee have received resolutions from various Boards of Guardians in support of the Bill, and they are glad to hear that the Poor Law Unions Association are taking steps to obtain Parliamentary support for the extension and alteration in the law desired by Boards of Guardians. The Committee welcome this action, as they were deeply impressed by the discussion which took place at last year's Conference, which showed how strongly Guardians felt upon the necessity of extending Section 1 of the Act of 1889 to other than "deserted" children.

A list of the Unions from whom resolutions have been received will be found in the Appendix to this Report.

The Committee have had under consideration the desirability of formulating the regulations which have hitherto governed the proceedings at the Central Conferences. These regulations they propose to submit to the approval of the Conference at its next meeting. In consequence they have thought it advisable not to allow the resolution to be moved with respect to Nursing.

The arrangement under which Messrs P. S. King & Son publish the official reports of the proceedings of the Central and District Conferences continues to work satisfactorily. It was understood that

all papers read at the Conferences would be printed in the Reports, but as the writer of a paper for the Yorkshire Conference refused at the last moment to allow it to be inserted in the Report of that Conference, the Committee advise Secretaries of District Conferences to inform all those who are invited to read papers that they will be published in the Official Reports as a matter of course, and that the reading of papers at Conferences implies the consent of the readers to their being published in the Reports.

Several changes have taken place in the Committee during the year. Thus for the South Midland District the Rev. Dr Cox (Chairman of the Brixworth Board) replaces Mr Ashurst; for the Eastern District, the Rev. T. H. Hocking (Chairman of the Samford Board) and Mr T. Cozens Hardy (Chairman of the St Faith's Board) replace Mr Montgomerie and the Rev. C. J. Steward; for the South-Western District, Mr J. W. Spear (of the Tavistock Board of Guardians) replaces Mr Domville; for the North Midland District, Mr Andrew (Chairman of the Leicester Board) and Mr Hanson (Chairman of the Basford Board) replace the Rev. C. C. Ellison and the Rev. E. Morris; and for the Yorkshire District, Mr Lawson (Chairman of the Leeds Board) and Mr Fitton (Chairman of the Huddersfield Board) replace Mr Brown and Mr Guy. There has been no change of representation for the remaining Districts. Miss Clifford, Sir J. T. Hibbert, Mr Manton, Miss Stacey, and the Hon. F. Strutt were again co-opted members of the Committee upon their term of office coming to an end, and the two remaining vacancies were filled by the co-optation of Mr W. Bousfield and Mr R. A. Leach.

A full statement of the receipts and expenditure connected with the holding of the two Conferences held during the year ending 30th April 1898, was sent to every Board of Guardians in England and Wales, showing a balance at that date in the hands of the Hon. Treasurer of £48. 14s. 8d.

In their last Report the Committee mentioned with regret the resignation of Mr J. J. Gover as Assistant Secretary. The Committee fully expect that Mr D. P. Murray, who has been appointed to the post, will emulate Mr Gover in the care and attention with which the latter gentleman served the cause of these Conferences.

The Committee have arranged for a portrait and memoir of Mr William Rathbone, of Liverpool, who has for so many years served the cause of sound Poor Law administration both in and out of Parliament, being included in the Official Report of this Conference.

The Committee have to thank the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London for again kindly placing at their disposal this splendid Hall for the purposes of the Conference.

The Committee are obliged to the Earl of Beauchamp for undertaking the office of President of the Central Conference on the eve of his departure from England as Governor of the Colony of New South Wales.

## APPENDIX A.

The following Unions have, at the suggestion of the Keighley Board of Guardians, forwarded resolutions to the Central Committee in favour of Mr Ernest Flower's Bill up to the date of publication of the Report of the Conference :—

Anglesey.	Guisborough.	Pontefract.
Ashbourne.	Hampstead.	Poplar.
Atcham.	Hastings.	Preston.
Auckland.	Hemsworth.	Risbridge.
	Highworth and Swin-	Rugby.
	don.	
Bakewell.	Hoo.	Scarborough.
Bala.	Horsham.	Sedbergh.
Barrow-in-Furness.		Selby.
Barton-upon-Irwell.	Keighley.	Settle.
Berkhampstead.	Kendal.	Skipton.
Berwick-on-Tweed.	Kidderminster.	Southampton.
Blean.	Kingston-upon-Hull.	Steyning.
Bodmin.	Knarborough.	Stratford-on-Avon.
Bradford-on-Avon.		
Bridgend and Cow-	Leeds.	Tenterden.
bridge.	Lutterworth.	Tisbury.
Broughton-in-Furness.		
Bucklow.	Melton Mowbray.	Ulverston.
Cardiff.	Narberth.	Wakefield.
Chester.	Neath.	Wandsworth and Clap-
Chichester.	Northampton.	ham.
Chipping Norton.		Warminster.
Cirencester.	Ormskirk.	Warwick.
Coventry.		Wem.
	Petersfield.	Wigan.
Droitwich.	Pocklington.	Worcester.

## APPENDIX B.

RULES FOR THE REGULATION OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT CENTRAL  
CONFERENCES, TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE NEXT CENTRAL  
CONFERENCE FOR ITS APPROVAL.

1. Papers read at the Conference shall in no case exceed thirty minutes in the reading of them, and where there are two or more papers read on the same subject they shall not exceed twenty minutes each.

2. Persons wishing to speak must send up their names and Union to the President, and the order of the speakers shall be that in which their names have been received, unless the President decide otherwise.



3. The limit of time for speakers shall be five minutes, but it shall be in the power of the President, with the consent of the Conference, to extend the time allowed to any speaker.

4. Where a special speaker is invited by the Committee to lead off the discussion on any paper, that speaker shall be allowed fifteen minutes.

5. All speakers, unless it be for the sake of asking questions or in rising to points of order, shall address the Conference from the platform.

6. No resolution, except for the conduct of business, shall be allowed.

7. The President for the year shall be selected by the Committee. In his absence, the Chairman of the Committee shall preside at the Conference, or in the absence of both, then the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, or in the absence of all three, then some other person to be appointed by the person vacating the chair.

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#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

EARL BEAUCHAMP said—I am sorry that the high office to which Her Majesty has honoured me by calling me will prevent me from touching upon those matters of more immediate practical application to which I should have preferred to allude, and will make me confine myself rather to the theory of the Poor Law and matters that are likely rather to call for attention during the next few years than at the present moment. The first thing that strikes one about a Conference of this kind is what happens when one goes to most public meetings, namely, that the people one most wishes to speak to are just those who do not come. I am sure you are the members of the more enlightened and progressive Boards of Guardians throughout the country, and though it is a pleasure to meet you and address you, it is not so much to you as to those who have not come here, and whose administration one would wish to improve in matters of detail, that one would like to speak. It is, therefore, not so much for what is done in this room, as the creation of a good public opinion in the districts to which you will return to take up the questions here discussed, for which we hope. One of the chief drawbacks with which Guardians have to contend is the way in which their proceedings are treated by the press. As a rule, Boards of Guardians are not noticed in the press unless there is a scrimmage or something of that sort. (Laughter.) The public generally are apt to forget the long service and hard work which is rendered on the various Committees of Boards of Guardians. Sometimes they come into prominence through having a fight with the Local Government Board. Most of us have been inclined at some time to say hard words about the Local Government Board. But there is this to be said in their

favour, that if they will not give their sanction to progressive schemes, they at any rate insist upon the maintenance of a certain level all round, and from what we read in the newspapers we must often wish that there were other departments of the kind. (Hear, hear.) The chief thing to aim at is the proper administration of the law as it stands at the present time. It is not for Boards of Guardians to discuss at their meetings whether they wish for this or that alteration of the law, but rather to administer the law as they find it in the best possible way, and it is therefore desirable that there should be representatives of every class of the community on the Boards of Guardians, and to my mind an ideal Board would include not only a certain number of ladies, but they would also hold their meetings at such a time of the day that working men could attend them. Now, the continuance of the Poor Law depends on the opinion in which it is held by those for whose benefit it was passed. What is a serious question for a Conference of this kind is this: What would happen if one or the other of the political parties were to go to the country on a cry for the reform of the Poor Law? Would it receive any substantial support? Now, for my own part, I am of opinion that the views of the poor of this country are not so fully in sympathy with the work of the Poor Law as we could wish them to be. This is not so much the case in the towns as in the country, but any political party which took up the question of the reform of the Poor Law would receive the serious support of the peasantry of the country, and if that is so, it is a serious matter. (Cheers.) The first necessity for the maintenance of this country is that there should be a healthy and a happy peasantry. If the Poor Law as at present administered does not meet the wishes of the peasantry for whose benefit it was passed, we must be convinced that there is something wrong. Into the reasons why the Poor Law does not meet with the approval of the large majority of the poor in this country I need not go. It is a truism, the dislike the poor have for the Workhouse. There is the question of old age pensions, of which we hear so much at the present time. Thrift is an excellent thing, but, for myself, I confess it seems to me an absolute impossibility, in fact it is hypocrisy, to suppose that a labourer can bring up a large family decently and lay up provision for his old age. (Cheers.) It therefore becomes necessary to consider in what way they may be provided for when they have reached an honourable old age. I am not now concerned to discuss the question of old age pensions, partly because it will be discussed during the Conference, and partly because slaying the arguments against old age pensions would be slaying a dead horse. (Hear, hear.) A labourer who has worked hard for his country deserves as well as a civil servant, and we must recognise that he is not treated with anything like the consideration which he deserves, but is forced into an asylum which he abhors and detests. Mr Chamberlain has well stated that such a state of things is a disgrace to the country. There are Royal



Commissions which issue ponderous Blue-Books, but it is a long time before anything is done. I am not sure, having regard to an article I have read to-day in the *Daily Chronicle*, which line is the best, but I am not going to inquire whether the line at Brixworth is as good as that at Bradfield. I trust that Guardians who have not seen the series of articles will read them at once. In suggesting to you however faintly what you all know is in my mind, out-relief as a possible method of providing for the poor in their old age, I am not anxious to go at any length into the question, partly because I see that Dr Cox, Chairman of the Brixworth Board, is going to read a paper to-morrow on this subject. I will make one or two remarks on the objections as they appear to one's mind. One is that the Poor Law as it exists at present is the result of the careful thought of the best men of the day, and it is a cry on the part of some that to reform reforms is a ridiculous anomaly. The Poor Law itself reformed other reforms, and surely when the social conditions have altered to such an extent it is necessary for us to further reform the Poor Law. (Cheers.) It is not necessary to examine the state of affairs at the time of the passing of the Poor Law: no doubt it was the best thing that could be done at the time, but a new state of circumstances has arisen, and in connection with them the Poor Law is out-of-date. If I were asked to put my finger on the key-note of the mistake which has been made, I should say it is that there has been an almost impossible attempt to deal with two different classes in one set of regulations. That was a somewhat favourite course on the part of the British Legislature. They had two different classes to deal with, and by a series of compromises they tried to deal with them under one law. The same thing applies to the education problem, which is very different in the country from what it is in the towns, but there is only one Act. In the Poor Law we have to deal with two different classes, the deserving and the undeserving poor, and while I would be willing to administer the law more strictly in regard to the undeserving, on the other hand I would be inclined to treat the deserving with much more consideration. (A Member: "Who is to draw the line?") My ideal Board of Guardians would be able to draw the line. Conferences like this serve to stir up public opinion generally on the Poor Law. You have heard a remark I am about to make so often that I am almost afraid to make it again, that you are elected not as Guardians of the Rates, but as Guardians of the Poor, but I venture to hope that those who are here to-day will go back to their own districts inspired somewhat by what they have heard, knowing that there are others trying in different parts of the country to do their best for the poor who come under their care, and that you will do your best also. (Loud and repeated cheers.)

Mr W. CROOKS, L.C.C. (Poplar), asked whether the Conference would be bound by the rules settled by the Committee. Rule 4 provided that selected speakers—selected by the Committee—should



have fifteen minutes for speaking, others only five minutes. By Rule 6 resolutions were prohibited. Surely they ought to encourage the members to take an interest in the debate by giving them an opportunity to express their opinions on the questions before them. He wished Mr Chance to submit the rules through the President that the whole Conference might express their views on them. (Hear, hear.)

Mr W. BOUSFIELD (Chairman of the Central Committee) said the whole of the rules would be submitted to the next Conference. The rules were not new rules; they represented the rules under which the Conferences had been carried on for many years, and the Committee considered the question the previous evening and decided that the rules should be submitted to the next Conference. Time did not permit of the rules being submitted this year.

Rev. Dr Cox inquired whether Rule 6 was to be followed or not, as it prohibited the passing of resolutions. He would be glad to know when Rule 6 was passed, because many older members than himself were utterly puzzled to know when such a rule came into force. In every report from 1875 to 1888, which he had been searching that morning, he found records of resolutions and voting thereon. He feared that Rule 6 had crept in altogether irregularly. It was most desirable to have the power of proposing resolutions. Surely it was futile to have discussions without resolutions and votes. (Cheers and counter cheers.) How could they convey their wishes to Parliament without voting?

The PRESIDENT stated that the rules had been in force for a long while, and that a promise had been made to submit them to the Conference before another annual meeting took place. With regard to Rule 4, it was one that the Chairman always had power to set aside in favour of any speaker if it was the wish of the Conference.

Dr Cox put a motion that resolutions be accepted, and that the Conference should have the opportunity of voting.

Mr W. CROOKS, L.C.C., seconded.

Mr BOUSFIELD appealed to Dr Cox not to stand between the meeting and the interesting papers they were awaiting, as the question was only academic at the present time. The Conference existed for deliberation, and the Committee had felt that to have resolutions would lead to waste of time, and defeat the object of the gathering. There had been no resolutions since 1886 except one which stated that a Poor Law Unions Association should be formed. He therefore appealed to the Conference to support the Committee and allow the discussion to go on with the full understanding that the regulations should be sent round to the various Boards before the next meeting, and full opportunity of discussion on the same be allowed. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CHANCE said that the practice for twelve years had been not to have resolutions. Still, the whole question might be left to the Conference to decide after proper deliberation, and after the matter

had been carefully considered by the Committee. He did not know how the rules had got into the hands of the public. (A laugh.)

Mr CROOKS—The Charity Organisation Society sent them round.

Mr CHANCE—The Conference had been very useful in the past, and he hoped that they would be conducted as heretofore. (Cries of "Vote, Vote.")

Rev. Dr COX moved, "That this Conference decides that it will be an advantage to vote on resolutions." (Cheers).

The resolution was defeated by an overwhelming majority, a result that was received with prolonged cheering.

Mr R. A. LEACH (Clerk to the Rochdale Board) read the following paper, entitled "Wider Powers for Guardians":—

## WIDER POWERS FOR GUARDIANS.

BY MR R. A. LEACH,

*Clerk to the Rochdale Board of Guardians.*

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THIS subject has been assigned to me without instruction or inkling as to how it is to be treated. Should Guardians have wider powers? If they should, what should those powers be? Therefore having had no instruction or inkling as to how I am to treat the subject, the answers to the two questions named are absolutely left, so far as the paper goes, to my discretion. It is well to make this preliminary statement, for if it should happen that this paper contains anything conflicting with or contrary to the judgment of the Conference, the responsibility for it and the blame for it must be placed on me.

Should Guardians have wider powers than they at present possess? Yes, they should. Then what should those powers be? The reply to the latter question suggests the necessity for arrangement of ideas. Anyhow, while endeavouring to make good the answer to the former question, I will, to meet the arrangement of ideas suggested by the latter, divide the subject under two heads.

## I. WIDER POWERS FOR GUARDIANS BY DECENTRALISATION.

At the Annual Poor Law Conference, held at Liverpool on the 1st October last, for the North-Western District (Lancashire and Cheshire), I had the opportunity of reading a paper on the question—"Is there a case for relaxing the power controlling the Guardians in their administration of the Poor Law?" To me there appeared no difficulty in making out a case, and a strong one too. In that paper it was shown by extracts from the Poor Law Statutes and the Poor Law Orders having the force of Statutes, that Boards of Guardians are held in the hollow of the hand of the Local Government Board as the Central Authority. Guardians as the local administrators of the Poor Law may only legally do as the Central Authority permits. Whatever liberty or discretion is allowed to them at the present time in the Poor Law Orders issued by the Local Government Board, or by their predecessors the Poor Law Board and the Poor Law Commissioners, may be taken away to-morrow by new order of the Board. As a matter of fact, however, it would be difficult for the Local Government Board to take much liberty or discretion away from the Guardians, for the simple reason that no liberty or discretion of any amount has ever been given to them. And why this is so may be gathered by a passing reference to the history of Central Control in Poor Law Administration.

The Central Board is the creation of the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, and that Act was shaped according to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1832. That Commission recommended *inter alia* the appointment of a Central Board "to control the administration of the Poor Law," and that such Central Board "be empowered and directed to frame and enforce regulations for the government of Workhouses, and as to the nature and amount of relief



to be given and the labour to be exacted." It is true that to this recommendation was added the suggestion that the regulations to be issued by such proposed Central Board should, as far as practicable, be uniform throughout the country. Still, the desirableness of uniformity of administration was not the first and foremost reason why the Commissioners recommended the creation of a Central Board. A new Poor Law Act which did not create a Central Board to control the local administration, argued the Commissioners, would be worthless, for said, they, "No legislative enactments can in this department of administration be relied upon as self-acting, because they will be inefficiently executed or perverted from—

" 1. The want of appropriate knowledge on the part of the distributors or annual officers.

" 2. The short duration of their authority.

" 3. The division of their authority.

" 4. The inadequacy of their motives to support a correct administration.

" 5. The strength of their interests in abusive administration ; and

" 6. Intimidation on the part of the rate receivers."

With the six reasons given, the Commissioners built up their case for the creation of a Central Board to control Poor Law Administration, and that Board having been brought into existence by the Act that so quickly followed, any one who cares to go into the matter will find that the Poor Law Orders that have been issued since are full of directions to do this and to do that, and of limitations and restrictions against doing that or doing this. And why? Just for the same reasons that the Commissioners of 1832 built up their case for a Central Board of Control, the reasons among which, let it not be forgotten, are :—The alleged want of appropriate knowledge on the part of the Guardians to administer relief aright, the alleged inadequacy of their motives to support a correct administration, the

alleged strength of their interests in abusive administration, and the alleged intimidation on the part of rate receivers. If the Guardians want to strengthen the tea of the old folks in the Workhouse by using  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of dry tea instead of 1 oz. to 9 pints of water and 1 pint of milk, it cannot be done without the sanction of the Local Government Board. If in a case of exceptional distress they wish to give outdoor relief in a way that is contrary to the prescribed Regulations, they cannot do it without the sanction of the Local Government Board. If they want to raise the Workhouse porter's salary sixpence a week, they cannot do it without the sanction of the Local Government Board. If, being outside the fifty miles radius of London, they want to send at the expense of the Common Fund three of their number with the Clerk to attend the Central Conference, they cannot do it, as the Local Government Board have determined that on no account shall more than two Guardians and the Clerk attend, an arbitrary restriction which would only have been justifiable had provincial Guardians ever treated the Conference as the opportunity for a trip to Town, and not treated it, as they have, as a gathering for serious business. Scores of instances could be given, many of them evidencing the greatest absurdities, in illustration of the far-reaching control which the Local Government Board exercise and which Guardians have to submit to, but, as such instances will be already in the minds of the members of the Conference, there is no need for me to give any beyond those already pointed out.

Now I contend that by a measure of decentralisation Boards of Guardians should be given wider powers in the direction of being left to do their own business in their own way. In the paper read by me at the North-Western District Conference, I submitted seven grounds which support such a contention. They are as follow :—

1. That the present control is based on recommendations made sixty-five years ago on evidence of conditions then existing, many of which have since been largely removed.

2. That the control to some extent was originally only intended as a safeguard against corruption and maladministration of a sort that public opinion in these days will not tolerate, and to that extent at least it is no longer justifiable.

3. That the control which Guardians have to submit to is much more severe than any other representative Board or Council charged with the administration of local affairs has to submit to, and that while there may be found reasons why Poor Law Administration, as a matter of national moment, should be guided more or less by a Central Board, no just grounds can be found for maintaining the existing severity of control.

4. That the present system entails an unreasonable amount of correspondence between the Central Board and the Guardians.

5. That the Guardians should have powers more in proportion to the liability of the ratepayers to pay for the local administration than is the case at present.

6. That the efficiency in the local administration of the Poor Law, as in all branches of local government, depends more upon the intelligence and integrity of those who are entrusted by the electors with such administration, and visits from the inspectors, than it does upon central control as prescribed in General and Special Orders.

7. That the practice of the Local Government Board in issuing Orders, Rules, and Regulations, having the force of statutes in Poor Law matters, without Guardians being first given an opportunity to approve or to disapprove of the proposals of the Board, is arbitrary and out of keeping with the spirit of the age.

There is no call to decentralise central control in



Poor Law Administration out of existence, although if that control were to be swept away in its entirety there would be no likelihood of the administration going back to that condition of looseness and worse which characterised the evil days of seventy years ago. The English nation does not readily forget the lessons that it has been taught by bitter experiences. The great progress which has been made in Poor Law Administration during the last twenty years or so—a far greater progress than took place during the preceding forty years—has been made not because Whitehall has made it, but because Guardians have themselves been determined that progress should be made. Mr Inspector Longley, in a report of his given in the Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, quotes with approval the remark that had been made at a Poor Law Conference by a Guardian. The remark was:—“We look to the Local Government Board to save us from ourselves.” Surely Guardians have by this time thrown off such mawkishness, if indeed they ever possessed it, to the extent of having warranted any Guardian in making such a remark as the one approved by Mr Inspector Longley.

But while a Board of Central Control exists and should exist, Boards of Guardians should be given far wider powers in the direction of being left to do their own business in their own way. Broadly speaking, the Local Government Board should be allowed no control over local Poor Law Administration except that which would be given to a Central Board, were one to be called into existence under the present local conditions of the administration for the first time. It is not difficult to estimate the measure of what that control would be. A Central Board of Control being brought into existence under present conditions would no doubt get the following powers, viz. :—

1. The power to deal with areas for local administration.

2. The power to approve bye-laws submitted by the Guardians and to make bye-laws in default of submission by the Guardians.

3. The power to sanction loans for buildings, &c., the repayment of which loans was to be spread over a number of years.

4. The power to impose conditions and to require security for the application of moneys granted directly or indirectly from the Imperial Exchequer in aid of the cost of the local administration.

5. The power to audit accounts, to call for returns, to make inspections, and to publish reports.

6. The power to dissolve defaulting Boards, and in such cases the power to appoint paid Guardians.

Beyond the aforementioned powers, in these days when the science of local self-government has reached the pitch it has, it is not likely that any powers would be given to any freshly created Central Board of Control. Any attempt to vest a Central Executive with all the powers that are conferred by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the Acts amending it would not be permitted to succeed.

Before passing on to the next part of the paper it should be noticed that the Local Government Board Inquiry Committee, in its report of June last, advised that the Local Government Board should divest itself of such powers of control, as it may consider expedient to do, where it can do so without fresh legislation. This recommendation is a recommendation for wider powers to be given to Guardians. So far so good, but the recommendation has one blemish. It is this:—The Committee would leave the Local Government Board to say how much of the Board's powers of control should be given up to Guardians. To my mind, the Board—and surely it may be said without being construed into a reflection upon any person connected with it—is too much hampered with traditions and precedents to be likely to see its way to part with much

in the way of freeing Guardians from the existing excessive control. The truth is that the time has arrived for another Royal Commission to deal with the whole question of Central Control in Poor Law Administration, as well as with those Poor Law problems which the new conditions that have gathered with the years have given rise to.

## II. WIDER POWERS FOR GUARDIANS IN MATTERS WHICH ARE UNAFFECTED BY THE QUESTION OF CENTRAL CONTROL.

The experiences of administration frequently impress Guardians with the fact that with all the fulness of the English Poor Law, deficiencies exist which need to be made good, and which can only be made good by the passing of an Act or Acts of Parliament. There is not time for me on this occasion to deal with all such deficiencies. I will therefore only deal with the wider powers for Guardians which the more commonly felt of those deficiencies seem to call for, and in doing so I would be understood as making no claim to originality of views.

1. *Power to enforce removal to the Workhouse in cases of sick and infirm paupers or applicants for relief who are without proper lodging or accommodation, and who refuse to go into the Workhouse.*

This power the Central Poor Law Conference decided in favour of in 1876, and at the time approached the President of the Local Government Board (Mr Sclater Booth) for the purpose of securing the necessary legislation. The President agreed with the Conference in the matter, but as yet Guardians are as powerless as they were then, and that is astonishing when such advocacy has been used and such support has been given in favour of such power being conferred upon Guardians as the advocacy and the support mentioned in Mr Chance's interesting work on "The



Better Administration of the Poor Law." Is it the dread of interference with the liberty of the subject that has stopped the power from being given. The liberty of the subject is a sacred matter in this country, and rightly so, but the liberty of the subject should not be allowed to prevent steps being taken for the subject's own good, nor is it allowed to do in many cases. If a person of unsound mind is not under proper care and control provision is made by the Lunacy Act, 1890, for steps to be taken to place, by physical compulsion, if necessary, the lunatic under proper care and control; the liberty or the wish of the insane is not allowed to prevail against his own good. If a person is suffering from any dangerous infectious disorder, and is without proper lodging or accommodation, or lodged in a room occupied by more than one family, provision is made by the Public Health Act, 1875, for the removal of such person to a suitable hospital or place; the liberty or the wish of the suffering person is not allowed to prevail against his own good or the good of the community. The Inebriates Act, 1898, contains provisions for the good of the subject at the expense of the liberty of the subject. In face of these instances of legal right to set the liberty of the subject aside for the good of the subject by compulsory removal of the subject to an institution established for his due care and maintenance, why should there be any hesitation to make statutory provision for the compulsory removal to the Workhouse in the cases of sick and infirm paupers or applicants for relief who are without proper lodging or accommodation, and who refuse to go into the Workhouse, and yet who cannot exist out of the Workhouse only in the midst of a filthiness, a wretchedness, and a poverty that hasten death? Where such persons as those named refuse to go into the Workhouse, they, as things now stand, hold in their refusal the whip hand over the Guardians and the Relieving Officer, for on the one hand while there is no power of

compulsory removal of such cases to the Workhouse, on the other hand the Guardians and their Relieving Officers are really compelled by public sentiment and by the advice of the Local Government Board to minister as best they may to the necessities of such cases outside the Workhouse, although the Guardians, being unable to remove the cases from the midst of indescribable filthiness and wretchedness, are just as unable to remove such filthiness and wretchedness from the cases.

Having in mind the safeguards enacted by the Lunacy Act, and the Public Health Act, in the requirements made by those Acts for Medical Certificates and Orders of Justices before removals can be effected, it is not likely that Guardians would be given the power advocated to be given without similar safeguards being required. Granted such safeguards, the power mentioned is a most desirable one and a much-needed one.

2. *Power to detain in the Workhouse the "Ins and Outs" for period beyond those enacted by Section 4 of the Pauper Inmates' Discharge and Regulation Act, 1871.*

The said section enables the Guardians of any Union to direct that any pauper inmate of the Workhouse, or the paupers of any class therein, shall be detained in the Workhouse, after giving notice to quit the same for times not exceeding the limited periods hereinafter mentioned, that is to say:—(1) "If the pauper has not previously discharged himself from the Workhouse within one month before giving notice, twenty-four hours. (2.) If he has discharged himself once or oftener within such month, forty-eight hours. (3.) If he has discharged himself more than twice within two months before giving the notice, seventy-two hours." For cases of habitual "Ins and Outs," who are the most troublesome and who form the worst class of the Indoor Poor, and who oftener than not have

young children whose welfare is never for a moment considered by their callously indifferent parents, the existing maximum period of seventy-two hours' detention after notice to quit is not enough. From the evidence taken by the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Poor Law Relief (Session 1888) it appears that a considerable number of Boards of Guardians had memorialised the Local Government Board to the effect that the maximum mentioned should be enlarged and that a deputation thereon had been received by the Board, but that the President doubted very much whether Parliament could be induced to adopt the necessary legislation. The Committee, however, reported that it might perhaps be advisable, in the case of casual paupers, to somewhat further extend the power of detention given by the Casual Poor Act, 1882, and the Order thereunder where the pauper has been re-admitted say within a period of fourteen days. If powers for further detention are advisable in the case of "Ins and Outs" among pauper wayfarers, they are, in my opinion, much more so for the class of non-wayfaring paupers, who morally are as bad as, if not worse than, the worst class of casuals, being too lazy or too vicious to get employment, and expecting that the Guardians will allow them, without restrictions on their liberty, to go in and out of the Workhouse as they please. If it be possible to terrorise the "In and Out" into a decent independent citizen by making him afraid by an extended period of detention to resort to the Workhouse, then the terrorising ought to be done.

3. *Power to take certain classes of paupers before the Justices to be dealt with as Idle and Disorderly Persons.*

One class are persons who, suffering from delirium tremens, have to be removed to the Workhouse. Another class are those who have to be admitted for treatment into the Workhouse Syphilitic Wards. The



destitution of these persons is consequent upon their own misbehaviour. The cost that the Common Fund is put to in dealing with the cases is seldom or ever repaid, and there ought to be the same power of dealing with such persons after they have recovered from their ailments as there is of dealing with the idle and disorderly persons to which the Vagrancy Act applies.

4. *Power to recover cost of relief where not now recoverable.*

Orders that Justices may now make on persons for the maintenance of relations who are in receipt of relief are not retrospective in their operation. If, therefore, for any reason whatever, there has been delay in applying to the Justices for a maintenance order, the cost of previous relief cannot be recovered. Power should be given to enable such previous relief to be recovered, even though the power could only be exercised at the discretion of the Justices. A reform of this kind would secure the repayment of much relief which is at present irrecoverable. While on this question the observation may be offered that, if grandparents are to remain liable according to their ability for the maintenance of destitute grandchildren, then in all fairness a liability for the maintenance of destitute grandparents ought to be placed on grandchildren according to their ability. Another observation that may be offered is that the law of maintenance wants altering in the direction of all indigent persons being able to get orders of maintenance made upon such of their relatives as are liable under the Poor Law, without the Poor Law having to be resorted to. In thousands of cases, taking the country at large, as the law of maintenance now stands, Guardians have to be made use of simply as collectors, and as may be inferred from what has already been stated, leakage in the collections is entirely at the cost of the much-burdened ratepayers.

5. *Power to exercise control as to the custody of certain classes of children.*

This is my last point. I have put it last, not because it is the least important of the matters falling under Division II. of my paper, rather is it the most important one. "The problem of the age," I believe it has been asserted, "is the problem of the child." At all events there is much to support such an assertion. In any case the problems which the Poor Law presents, calls for more complete safeguards to be taken for the protection of the interests and for the furtherance of the welfare of children coming on the relief lists, especially on the Indoor relief lists. Given a free hand, Guardians are able to provide for these children a future which will not suffer by comparison with children who have been born and cradled among more fortunate circumstances. But in proportion as Guardians are hindered, fettered, and stopped in their work of child emancipation, in that proportion is child life blighted, and the fruits of the blight are adults who are worthless to society, moral nuisances, and plagues. The welfare of the pauper child cries aloud that more power than Guardians have should be given to Guardians for securing that welfare. By the Poor Law Act, 1889, as we all know, Guardians are given, on complying with the requirements of the Act, the rights and powers of parents in respect of deserted children. As far as that Act goes it is good, very good. But the Guardians are yet without power to save the children of those paupers of the permanent class whose character or mental deficiency renders them unfit to have the control of their offspring. The "Ins and Outs" may laugh, as they often do, at all efforts of the Guardians to do the best they can for the children, for the laughers know that it is only a question of time, and they will make their children as vicious as themselves. When children whose parents are in the Workhouse have been placed out

in service by the Guardians, the parents may yet with an impunity which outrages all proper feelings go and drag the children back into a black and disastrous future. This sort of thing, which is an everyday occurrence, wants putting a stop to. It may be admitted that to relieve parents too readily of the responsibility of the care of their children is to invite mischief. Still if parents are determined to live the life of parasites, and if they are determined to turn their offspring into parasites, is it right that they should be allowed to work this greater mischief? I say "No," and power to stop them should be given to Guardians. To this end a Bill is being promoted in the present Session of Parliament by the State Children's Association. That Bill I commend to the favourable consideration of the Boards represented at this Conference.

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### DISCUSSION.

Dr J. MILSON RHODES (Chorlton), who was warmly greeted, said they had all enjoyed the excellent paper, and would all agree that greater powers should be conferred upon Guardians than they had at the present time, if only for the sake of diminishing the friction which existed between the Local Government Board and the Guardians, and one department in particular, the Audit Department. (Hear, hear.) Over one hundred surcharges were made last year, and only one was confirmed, eleven were reserved, and the rest were remitted. It meant that one hundred Boards were needlessly annoyed. In a northern Union they had a garden in which were a few fruit trees, and the Guardians had used the fruit for jam for the staff, but last year they could not do so because the auditor had disallowed the price of the sugar. (Laughter.) It sounded like a statement out of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, but it was quite true. His own Board had Cottage Homes, the best in England, of course—(laughter and hear, hear)—and those Homes were at a distance of about eleven miles from the Workhouse. There were a very large number of officials employed there, and they had to be paid their salaries, but the orders of the Local Government Board said that if a salary is over £5 it must be paid by cheque. If the officials were paid in that way they would have to come into Manchester, about eleven miles, to cash the cheques, and their time would be wasted. The Board asked the Local Government Board to allow the officials to be paid in cash, but the Local Government Board said "No,"



they must go on drawing cheques, and the consequence was the official who took the cheques to the Union took in another pocket the money to cash them. (Hear, hear.) It was perfect nonsense to go on like that. (Hear, hear.) At another place the Workhouse was a considerable distance from the office, and the Guardians proposed to have two cabs. That was surcharged, so the Board bought a horse and brougham, and that was perfectly legal. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) It was time the Audit Department set to work and simply audited. (Hear, hear.) The auditors—some of them—should cease trying to teach their grandmothers to suck eggs. (Hear, hear.) In the interest of the Poor Law administration the Audit Department ought to be reformed, if only to diminish friction now existing between the Local Government Board and Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Sir J. T. HIBBERT (Ulverston) said he had had the pleasure of hearing the paper before at the North-Western Conference, but it was one that would repay repetition, and he hoped it would be read by Guardians all over the country. He wished to make an excuse for standing up and speaking on this question. He had been a Guardian for nearly thirty years, and twice Secretary, first of the old Poor Law Board and then of the Local Government Board, and last year he was Chairman of a Committee appointed to consider the reorganisation of the Local Government Board. He did not mean to let out any secrets of the Local Government Board—there were not many secrets—the work of the Local Government Board was pretty well known to everybody who took an interest in Poor Law work. The time had arrived when considerably more power should be given to Boards of Guardians, and for the relaxation of many troublesome and annoying regulations. He was told when he argued the matter, and proposed such changes, that the rules were required for the bad Boards. No doubt the rules had been beneficial in the past, but they must remember that though the rules might be good for bad Guardians, they were irritating to the good ones, and therefore he had always supported the proposals for an alteration. (Cheers.) There was a correspondence lasting some weeks between a Board and the Local Government Board last year as to whether currants should be used in a pudding, and he remembered a long correspondence about a stick of sealing wax. (Laughter.) They had been at work, their predecessors and themselves, for fifty-four years, and during that time the greatest progress had been made in the administration of the Poor Law of the country, and he was very glad to acknowledge that though, when it was proposed a few years ago to elect Guardians by direct election, “One Man, One Vote,” they were told that it would result in a very great change for the worse in the Poor Law, no such change had taken place, and that there was now if anything a better administration of the Poor Law. It mattered nothing what class the Guardians were drawn from, for the Guardians had to consider the interests of the poor as well as of the ratepayers. (Hear, hear.) Although the cost of the main-

tenance of the poor had greatly increased, and was now between seven and eight millions of money, it was not spent in a wrong way, but in giving more comfort to the poor, and in maintaining the infirmaries and sick wards in a proper condition. (Hear, hear.) Seven or eight million pounds seemed a large sum, but it was not a large sum to spend on the poor of the country when they remembered that the people spend 150 millions a year on drink. There were two sides to the question which Mr Leach had brought before them. He was sorry to say that public opinion seemed to be trending towards the nationalisation of the Poor Laws, rather than keeping them under local control as they had been in the last fifty years. If they nationalised the Poor Law, they must give the central authority more power than it had at the present moment, for it was only by making the ratepayers locally responsible for the poor that they could ask that the power of the Local Government Board should be relaxed. (Cheers).

Colonel HARBIN (Yeovil) said that in his Union they had great difficulties about the appointment of officers. They believed it advisable to change the medical officer's districts owing to two large villages losing the greater part of their population. The doctor was perfectly willing to agree to everything but a reduction of his salary. (Laughter.) They waited their time until a district fell vacant, and then they said, "Now we have an opportunity of making a contract that will give us a little better terms." The parties concerned were willing, but the Local Government Board referred the Guardians to the Consolidated Orders of 1847 or something of that kind. They had progressed a little since 1847, but until such things as the Orders of 1847 were got rid of they could not make any real advance. Finding the Local Government Board obdurate, they said, "There is another little institution called the House of Commons." (Hear, hear.) The member asked a question about it, but the President of the Local Government Board, with his grand magniloquent manner—(laughter)—rather snubbed their member, but when the estimates came on, and there was a sort of veiled threat that Mr Chaplin's salary would be cut down a little bit—(laughter)—the question was a little further investigated, and the late Under-Secretary of the Local Government Board began to see that there was something to be said for the contention of the Yeovil Board. (Laughter, and Hear, hear.) Was it right that Guardians should have to move heaven and earth and the House of Commons to get these obsolete Orders reversed? (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr FELDMAN (Kingston-upon-Hull) said they recently applied to the Local Government Board for the extension of the boarding-out system, which had worked admirably in that Union. After several letters had passed between the Board and the Local Government Board, the latter eventually consented to receive a deputation. They had a very friendly reception, and went away under the impression that the request would be acceded to; but to their regret they



received a communication a few days later that the application could not be granted. Their laundry was injured by fire, and had to be partly rebuilt. After the plans were passed by the Local Government Board a few slight alterations were necessary, and to get the consent of the Local Government Board to those entailed considerable delay. Town Councillors had much more extensive powers than Guardians, and were able to spend the ratepayers' money without getting the consent of the Local Government Board. What difference was there between Guardians and Town Councillors? Both were elected on the same principle, and ought to have equal rights. (Hear, hear.) He considered that the limited powers possessed by Guardians were derogatory to the principle of representative government, and if larger powers were granted they would be used in a judicious and practical manner. (Hear, hear.) The freedom from control had been the means of developing the principle of municipal government, and if the same thing were extended to Guardians there would be greater interest shown in the administration of the Poor Law. He hoped that the day was not far distant when pressure would be brought to bear upon the Government by members of Parliament to ensure that Guardians should no longer be treated as children. (Cheers.)

Mr ELLIOTT (Leighton-Buzzard) pleaded for wider powers in regard to details of dietary, and said that if the Local Government Board would not give permission, Guardians should act without the permission. He mentioned (amid laughter and cries of "Question" and "Sit down") that the old men asked him soon after his election—under the Act of 1894—for vinegar on their cabbage; but it could not be done without the consent of the central authority.

Mr LANSBURY (Poplar) said they all wanted wider powers for Boards of Guardians, but he did not think they wanted heavier taxation. If the decrease of central supervision meant the decrease of grants-in-aid, they in London, at any rate, would be very much opposed to it. (Hear, hear.) He for one would be very glad to see all the tomfoolery of petty restrictions swept away. He did not think it was either logical or right that the poorer East End and southern parishes of London should be responsible for the maintenance of all the poor that were squeezed out there by the constant extension of the commercial life of the city, which caused the working classes to have to go further out, and the burden of the poor rate was almost intolerable. The burden should be cast on the shoulders of those who had already too much wealth. New sources of income should be tapped, and he knew of nothing better than a graduated income-tax all over the country. He refused to believe that the commercial and aristocratic classes would deny to the poor the means of living under better conditions, especially after the noble chairman's speech of that morning. He was delighted to think that the President of a Central Poor Law Conference had had pluck enough to say that it was impossible for labourers to maintain



a family decently and provide for their old age. The burden of the worker's old age should be laid upon the community, and he wanted to protest against the "terrorising" of any one, an expression in Mr Leach's paper. He did not believe in casting out devils by devils. (Cheers.) Men could not be reformed by brutal treatment; let them be organised for honest labour, useful and productive, so that they might get their own living. (Hear, hear.) As long as they penned people in casual wards in useless labour, so long would they do no good. Such people must be subjected to the discipline of everyday work. With regard to the Local Government Board, he thought that the Guardians did wrong to appoint officials for life, for they could not be got rid of unless they had done some wrong. Every now and then Guardians found officers who were not necessary, and they had to be bought out. Guardians were now called upon to appoint officers under the Vaccination Act, and they had only to pay the piper. He was anxious that the grants to the poorer parishes should not be lessened, and that the cost of the maintenance of the poor should be a national obligation. It was a small matter—only some seven or eight millions sterling, as compared with forty millions for armaments and one hundred and fifty millions for drink. If a little more money were expended in enabling the poor to live happier lives it would be to the good of the whole community. (Cheers.)

Mr LOCKE (Aylesbury) said that the paper was an excellent one, and provided the Conference with abundant food for thought when they got back to their own homes. (Hear, hear). He also listened to the President's address with great pleasure. The remarks were of a practical character, and would not be lost upon them. (Hear, hear.) As to the Local Government Board having control over the officers, he agreed with it to a large extent, because the Local Government Board, before it would sanction the appointment of an official, went carefully into the antecedents of the applicant, and often furnished a little useful information. It was, however, time that Guardians should have power to deal with matters of detail. A case occurred in his own knowledge of a medical officer being accused of neglect of duty. The Guardians were anxious to have a thorough investigation into the complaint, and to this end an agricultural labourer was brought some miles to attend before the Board as a witness. The medical officer was exonerated, and when the witness applied for his expenses—half-a-crown—for coming eight or ten miles to the Board, the Clerk advised the Guardians they could not allow the expenses without the express permission of the Local Government Board.

Mr WALTER (King's Norton) said that, as some of them knew, his Board were very proud of their Cottage Homes. Two children had been inmates of the Cottage Homes for a long period, and their mother was an inmate of the Workhouse. When the master made a complaint about the woman, she took her discharge from the House,

and removed the children from the Cottage Homes, so that they would now probably run the streets and develop into thieves. It was an illustration of the necessity of having greater powers for Guardians. (Hear, hear.)

Mr MALLET (Norwich) said they ought to be very careful in asking for wider powers for Guardians, for there might be many abuses. A large-hearted individual moved that the Board should purchase two hundred umbrellas for the children to go to school with—(laughter)—and another asked for billiard tables. (Laughter.) Only the other day at Yarmouth they had the spectacle of a Board appointing the wife of one of the Guardians to an office in the Union, and her husband attended and voted for her. (Laughter.) He would be glad, however, if Guardians had power to deal with worthless vagrant parents with a strong hand. (Hear, hear.) The Conference would also be doing a great public service if it would ask Parliament to confer on Guardians the power of removing to the Workhouse persons who were in receipt of out-relief, but whose sanitary surroundings were improper. His Board had refused several applications for out-relief on the ground that the applicant was in a filthy state or badly housed. (Hear, hear.)

Mr ALBERT PELL (Brixworth) said he listened with great attention to the admirable paper read by Mr Leach. It expressed what had come into his own mind over and over again in the course of fifty years' experience as a Poor Law Guardian in and out of London, and he quite agreed with Mr Leach that the time had come when there should be some rearrangement of the work of the Local Government Board which would facilitate the work in the Board rooms of the different Unions throughout the country—(Hear, hear)—but they must not jump to the conclusion that any very great reforms would be conceded to them. What the Local Government Board had to do was to follow as closely as it could first principles, and in this case the first principles were those enunciated by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834. (Hear, hear.) But, apart from that, the Conference must remember that the Local Government Board were responsible not only for the proper expenditure of the local rates, but also of the money granted by the Treasury, and therefore the matter was not such an easy one as some of them might think. He recollected serving on one Board in the East End—one of the poorest parishes—where some of the soundest principles of Poor Law administration were put into practice. The Board, with certain other Metropolitan Boards, asked the Local Government Board to give operative effect to the rules which were so successfully applied in the Union in question, but the Local Government Board did not see their way to grant permission, and it would have been necessary to go to Parliament to get the requisite sanction. He concurred with Mr Leach that it would be well if the Local Government Board would grant wider powers to Guardians in the direction indicated by him. The Conference was greatly indebted to Mr



Leach, a man of great experience, for putting the matter so forcibly before them. (Cheers.)

Mr NEWDIGATE (Warwick) said greater powers of detention should be given over those who were unable to take care of themselves; the feeble-minded, who were only just able to get their discharge; the habitual drunkard, and certain other classes. (Hear, hear.) Another point in which Guardians should have more discretion was classification. One of the greatest objections on the part of the poor to entering the Workhouse was that they would have to herd with the lowest and worst conducted portion of the population, and being treated as one of them, and subject consequently to the most rigid rules and restrictions. With greater powers of classification Guardians might treat the deserving poor more as they would be treated if they were the inmates of almshouses. (Cheers.)

Mr WEEKES (Cuckfield) said Mr Leach seemed to him to wish to take away the liberty of the subject from certain persons who were deemed to be likely to be better off in the Workhouse, and Mr Leach classed them, he understood, with inebriates and imbeciles. That would not do. Let them improve the Infirmarys and Workhouses. The Local Government Board Inspector of his district had within the last few days declared that his (the speaker's) Infirmary was the best not only in the county but in the country—(laughter)—and there would be no difficulty in getting the poor to avail themselves of the accommodation. In his Union one in every hundred was an inmate. (Cheers and laughter.)

Sir J. T. HIBBERT said he desired to add that one of the acts of the Departmental Committee over which he presided was to recommend that, in the case of the appointments of some six thousand officers, the necessity of reporting to the Local Government Board should be done away with. (Cheers.)

Mr LEACH, replying on the discussion, said he did not class the aged and the infirm with inebriates. Why he brought them into proximity was to show that, where the good of the person required it, the liberty of the subject was set aside. He came from a Union which was a progressive Union, and he did not doubt as good as that at Cuckfield—(laughter)—but it would not do to make the place too good, or they would have people seeking admission who were in no way eligible for it, and had no business to be there. He did not wish it to be thought that he had so little perused the Poor Law that he was unaware that there was liberty of action entrusted to Poor Law Guardians. His point was that the liberty allowed was inadequate. (Hear, hear.) That was why he suggested wider powers for Guardians. (Hear, hear.) As for the power to allow the use of vinegar with cabbage—he never heard such nonsense. (Cheers and laughter.) As to “terrorising,” he did not mean by that penal or useless work, but work; and work of any kind was a terror to the worthless. (Hear, hear.) If they were to have local control, localities must be prepared to pay for it. The principle



of the old Act of Elizabeth was, that persons should support the chargeable poor of their district according to their ability, and it was only a modernised principle which had led the people to look in other directions for the means of supporting the poor. He thanked the Conference for their appreciative reception of his paper. (Cheers.)

The PRESIDENT stated that a circular of the State Children's Aid Association, asking for the support of Boards of Guardians to Mr E. Flower's Bill dealing with neglected children, would be distributed at the door of the hall.

The Conference then adjourned for lunch.

In the afternoon,

Mr W. Bousfield took the chair, as Earl Beauchamp had to attend a meeting of the School Board for London.

Mr BOUSFIELD stated that the following memorial had been drafted by Sir John Hibbert for signature by the delegates :—

“That the Central Conference be requested to organise a deputation to bring before the Local Government Board the serious difficulties which at present exist in connection with the supply of trained nurses for Workhouse Infirmaries and Workhouse Sick Wards, and to ask the Board to take immediate steps for removing the difficulties complained of.”\*

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Secretary) read the following letter from Miss Gibson (Matron of the Birmingham Poor Law Infirmary) :—

MATRON'S OFFICE, THE INFIRMARY,  
BIRMINGHAM, 7th February 1899.

“DEAR MR CHANCE,—I am very sorry that I am unable to be in London on the 16th, for I feel very strongly that something must be done on the nursing question, and that *none* of the schemes at present before us are adequate or satisfactory. It is a real trial to me to be unable to air my views! I feel the absolute futility of reading papers unless they are followed up by some action, and by the formation of some influential body or committee who will influence the Local Government Board, and induce that body to join with us. I don't believe that independent effort on the part of the public, the Boards of Guardians, or the big Infirmaries, will be found sufficient. I am sure that only the really large Infirmaries can deal with the question practically, and they must have the support of all Guardians and also of the Local Government Board. Please excuse this. I want to say so much that I ought not to have begun!—Yours very truly,

“A. C. GIBSON.”

Miss WILKIE was then called upon to read her paper.

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\* This memorial was signed by eighty-nine delegates from Boards of Guardians, but as this number did not represent one-fourth of the delegates present at the Conference, the Committee did not consider themselves justified in taking any action upon it.

# THE BEST MEANS OF PROVIDING AND TRAINING NURSES FOR THE IN- DOOR POOR.

BY MISS C. B. S. WILKIE,

*Lady Superintendent of the Halifax Workhouse Infirmary.*

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YEAR by year the question of the nursing of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmarys has been brought under the notice of Conferences, and with the years the aspect of the question has altered. In its earlier presentments the necessity for trained nursing was the point upon which conviction was needed. When that was attained the position and treatment of the nurses became the matter of the moment; and to-day the consideration of the question of the inadequate supply of nurses qualified to fulfil the requirements of the Nursing Order of 1897 is of paramount and vital importance. That Order, like so many others, does not go to the root of the evils. It merely suggests palliative treatment. It is weak. It forces slight improvements on existing conditions, but the Local Government Board fails to recognise its responsibility for these conditions, or its responsibility or power in the alteration of a state of affairs admittedly wrong.

The *Times* inquires, in an article published 22nd December 1897, "Where are the nurses now to come from for the carrying on of Poor Law work? . . . The effect of the new Order will be to make the demand for trained nurses for infirmaries greater than ever, and now that the Workhouse Infirmary Nurses' Association has stopped work, it is thought that the Local Government Board will be compelled to take some definite action in the matter. There is reason to believe that that body has not sufficiently realised the difficulty in the way of securing competent nurses for Workhouse Infirmarys under present conditions; but the question arises whether the Central Poor Law

authority will not now be forced to establish some system of its own for the training of nurses for Poor Law services as it already does for the army and navy, and at the same time to reorganise the whole system as regards the status of the nurses when they have been trained.

The *Lancet*, in its issue of 11th December 1897, remarks: "There is no doubt that the time has now come when the central authority shall take up the matter of organising a training school for Workhouse nurses, and for introducing reform as regards increased salaries, pensions, regulations for duty, and the like, so as to constitute a separate and more attractive service of its own on the same lines as has been recently done in the army and navy."

These suggestions and hopes have not yet been realised. To any one practically interested in the care of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmaries (a care which should not be limited to their bodies), the need of a radical change must be very apparent—a change which, to be thorough, must be revolutionary, which must clear away abuses root and branch, and replace an inefficient system with one which shall provide in entirety for the needs of the patients and the nurses. Alteration to meet one or another of these needs will not suffice. The alteration should meet all needs.

In order to induce you to give your attention and influence to the desirability of a revolutionary change, it is necessary to point out to you that the present system is unsound in principle and defective in operation; that it leads to a serious amount of wrong; and to lay before you just and reasonable proposals, which, if carried out with completeness, would be effective in operation.

A primary consideration is the nurse. What is the qualification for a trained nurse? To such a question there is no satisfactory reply. It is a matter of opinion—opinion as various as are the knowledge and capacity



of the multitude. There is no standard. Every hospital sets its own. There is neither uniformity of training nor of standard of attainment. Is that not a fundamental error?—an error which might, and ought to be remedied without delay. Why should the Local Government Board not constitute a nursing department, worked by a committee formed of professional and lay members—a committee which should formulate a general scheme of training in detail, and which should be an examining body? All examination questions should emanate from that source. Examinations should be held at fixed intervals, and all papers of answers should be returned to, and judged at, headquarters.

The age at which probationers would be received to be decided by the department. Each nursing school should have the choice of candidates for that school, but such candidates only to be admitted on three months' trial, at certain stated periods, after satisfying the requirements of the examining body as to their general knowledge. The time of training should be fixed at four years. During the first two of these years no salary should be paid; board, lodging, washing and uniform should be provided, and training fees should be charged. Why should a nurse receive training at no monetary cost—on the contrary, gain to herself—while a medical, or any other student, has to pay for all his knowledge. Knowledge paid for is generally valued.

In order that otherwise suitable women should not be debarred from entering the service, scholarships should be established, the funds for the provision of such scholarships to be acquired by capitation grants to each training school. Prizes and medals should be given for proficiency; but not for proficiency in theoretical work alone. In connection with the nursing department there should be a staff of nursing inspectors who would visit, inspect the hospitals, and examine

the probationers in practical work. Such examinations to be on regular and fixed lines, at regular and fixed periods. Certificates of a definite value should be granted by the department to probationers according to merit and proficiency at the end of two years.

In the succeeding two years further development of character and powers of management and organisation should be specially encouraged. A salary should be paid during these two years.

The question of all salaries should be one under the control of the central authority, who would also be required to draw up general and detailed rules for use in all the infirmaries. The matrons of such training schools should be selected with much care. Influence should be no factor in their selection; they should be chosen on account of their special fitness for such posts. They should be women of great moral and mental force, able to judge and develop character—women of great personal influence, with an infinite capacity for taking pains, self-reliant and self-controlled, and with an unlimited fund of enthusiasm.

Such a scheme, if carried out, would put the training and certification of nurses on a definite basis. There would be a minimum standard of training and a minimum standard of proficiency.

Let it be clearly understood that in its working each school would be independent, but it would have to follow some definite plan of teaching as laid down by the central authority, just as a boys' school entering pupils for the Oxford or Cambridge local examinations has to carry out some definite preparation; and as the boys have to pass a definite examination common to boys entering in all parts of England, so all the probationers in all the training schools would have to pass an examination common to all—an examination set by the central authority, as the Oxford or Cambridge authority sets it for the boys; and as the

answers are examined and marks awarded by these authorities, so would the answers of the probationers be examined and marks awarded by the central authority. It is foolishness to allow each hospital to set its own standard. The result is astonishing diversity of teaching and certification, some certificates not being worth the paper on which they are written.

The necessity for some definite standard of training and proficiency is becoming more apparent to Boards of Guardians. The petition of the Norwich Board of Guardians, and the support it has received, are proofs of that necessity, and of the desire that the necessity should be relieved. But the carrying out of such a scheme as that suggested in the petition would merely result in the establishment of a separate class of nurse of very limited attainment, much below the highest level of the profession. The aim should be to provide the Poor Law service with the best possible. Contentment with less should not be entertained for a moment.

But it may be asked: How would the establishment of the training and certification of nurses on definite lines help the smaller Workhouse Infirmarys to solve the difficulty of the supply of nurses? Only in so far that a certificate would have the definite value it at present lacks. The supply might be guaranteed under a scheme by which the smaller Workhouse Infirmarys would be worked in association with the larger ones. Miss Gibson, of the Birmingham Workhouse Infirmary, read a paper last May at the West Midland District Poor Law Conference, in which she suggested that the large training schools might train for the smaller Workhouses. But the nurses sent out from the large schools, as at present constituted, would find the same monotony and difficulties in the small Workhouse Infirmarys as are found by the nurses who now take such appointments only to give them up after a short time. The fact that the nurses were under



agreement with a central authority, as Miss Gibson suggests, would not make the conditions less irksome. But the difficulty might be overcome by grouping the infirmaries in districts, counties, or parts of counties, but districts whose limits would have to be defined by expert knowledge. Such districts must each have within them an infirmary properly equipped in all respects, which would be a training school for the district. Nurses would be sent out from that school in turn to the smaller infirmaries, just as they would be sent from ward to ward in the training school. The nursing of the whole district would be under one control, and would be raised to the same level. The nurse sent to a small country infirmary would know that the monotony was only a temporary thing, and the nursing would have to be as well done as if she were in the wards of the central infirmary, and, if under less favourable circumstances, she probably would find her powers of self-reliance and resource develop. She would learn adaptability. She would be imbued with the best traditions of her school, and would bring some of the influences of her larger life to bear on the more narrow life of the small isolated infirmary. The whole cost of Poor Law nursing—salaries, maintenance, grants, travelling expenses—should be borne by the nursing department, who should receive a rate, proportionate to the number of sick for whom provision was made, from each Parish or Union, and would from that source meet all the cost involved in the provision and maintenance of a recognised system of training and nursing. Or the financial arrangements might be altogether—as it is now partially—left in the hands of the County Councils.

That immense trouble would be involved in the development of the details of such schemes, that the initial cost might be high, that there would be many prejudices and obstacles of one kind and another to overcome, is unquestionable. But that reform is a

necessity is as unquestionable. Would the schemes suggested make for the necessary reform?

It is almost impossible within the limits of a paper so large and general in its subject to enter into details—details calling for the consideration of experts, candid and reasonable men and women, who will bring a large and generous perception to bear on the condition and possibilities of the nursing of the sick poor in the Workhouse Infirmaries.

The problem has to be faced. It should be faced boldly, and it would be if the hearts of all Guardians and Poor Law authorities could be stirred by the thought of the sick, the lonely neglected sick, who spend their lives within the same walls day after day, year after year, tended often by selfish, careless, uninterested hands, here to-day and gone to-morrow, free to flee the monotony which must be endured by the sufferers, perhaps but ill in the early days, but bound to them by the cords of pain and helplessness.

Do the suggestions embodied in this paper meet the difficulties of the existing state of affairs? Would not a definite and recognised system of training elevate the status of nurses, raise the whole tone of the profession, and would not the minor difficulties of the place and treatment generally of the Workhouse Infirmary nurse disappear?

To consider the causes of the minor difficulties would be very instructive, and if what may be called the patchwork policy is to remain a force, unquestionably such consideration might result in the modification of the existing errors, if not in their removal.

It is a very significant fact that most of the Local Government Board Inspectors in their yearly reports to the Local Government Board dismiss the subject of the condition of the hospitals and the nursing of the sick in their districts in a short generalising paragraph.

The reports of Mr Bagenal, Mr Baldwin Fleming,

and Mr Preston Thomas are the exceptions. Mr Bagenal pleads for a better type of woman as well as nurse, of women worthy to be classed with Miss Nightingale. But he must remember that Miss Nightingale was exceptional in her day and generation, and that her work was done in exceptionally stirring times. There are women of equally noble type to be found to-day taking "the daily round the common task," and making them glorious. But because it is the "daily round the common task," with no environment of exceptional circumstances, the greatness of character and work are overlooked in the press of a commonplace community.

Many Unions find a great difficulty in getting nurses. To take a typical case. The Clerk to the Chipping Norton Guardians reported that he had advertised for an assistant nurse at a salary of £26, and for a certificated nurse at a salary of £30. To the former he received no reply; to the latter, one from an unsuitable person. The advertisements were inserted in the local and county papers. Let it be well remembered that the best class of nurse looks for professional advertisements in a professional paper, and not in local and county papers.

Would not the appointment of women inspectors—trained nurses, women of the best type, and possessing critical and suggestive faculty—mean a better understanding of the errors of the present system; would not the weakness and the strength be more accurately gauged, and, as a result, improvements suggested and effected? Detailed knowledge of the general existing conditions is necessary before permanent reform can be achieved.

Miss Julian, Matron of the Croydon Workhouse Infirmary, pointed out in the paper she read at the General Meeting of the London and District Poor Law Officers' Association last month, that the position of the small infirmary nurse is very lonely compared with



the life of her fellow nurse in the small general hospital, and lacks the relief of sympathy and change brought by the interest the outside world takes in the hospital nurse. The monotony of the daily life and the isolation have a depressing tendency on the average nurse. Isolation means to so great an extent helplessness.

A nurse leaves her training school to take up work in a small isolated Workhouse Infirmary. She finds the convenient, well-planned sick wards replaced by inconvenient, unsuitable accommodation. The supply of the materials essential for the proper performance of her duties inadequate and absent. The manual help required equally inadequate or absent. The work of her training school was well organised—she finds a lack of organisation and a slackness of administration. And let it be emphasised that the maladministration of the Workhouse is a leaden weight of depression on the spirits of many enthusiastic capable women. The letter of the law may be kept, but the spirit is lacking.

In the training school the material comfort of the nurse was considered. She now finds her quarters less comfortable. She worked the definite number of hours each day. She had definite hours of relaxation away from the wards, to which she returned refreshed; now she finds her hours of relaxation reserved for one afternoon in the week. She had the companionship of her fellow-nurses generally, the friendship of the few, to share her off-duty time. She could talk, work, read, walk, in the midst of that friendship and companionship. Now she is always alone. Her food, of well-varied character, was well cooked and nicely served, and eaten in the cheerful company of her fellows. All is altered. Beef and mutton and rice pudding run their unchanging course, and probably must be cooked by the nurse or an inmate, and possibly in the nurses' room, and eaten in

solitude. Can it be wondered that the nurse's appetite flags under these circumstances, and that her general health and spirits sooner or later fail? The general difficulties and discomforts then become magnified, and are less easily grappled with. The moral, mental, and physical strain becomes very tense. She feels it is no use working under those conditions any longer. To a working woman health is of primary importance, and she gives up the struggle, and seeks work under more healthy conditions. Can her action excite surprise?

The position of the nurse in regard to the Master and Matron is a fruitful source of unrest. To-day the Local Government Board demands from its nurses evidence of technical and specific training as qualification for an appointment. But though it lays down certain definite rules and regulations as regards the duties and powers of the Master and Matron, it requires no evidence of the moral, mental, or technical training of those important officials. Boards of Guardians fail to realise that a man and woman may be of a most estimable type, but quite unsuitable for the position of Master and Matron of a Workhouse. The scope for moral force resting in the power of such authority is to an enormous extent overlooked. The Matron is perhaps appointed apparently for no other reason than that she is the wife of the Master. She may be a woman who would repay training, but she has it not, and just as surely as musician, painter, or preacher would fail to enthral us without having the natural gifts trained and developed, so does the untrained material present in the Matron fail to be a power in the Workhouse. Her lack of training, and consequently understanding, must produce many of the difficulties in the life and work of the nurse. She has no comprehension of the situation and its requirements.

A remedy would be that the Local Government

Board should make it compulsory that the Matron of such Workhouses as have an insufficient number of sick to warrant the employment of a Superintendent Nurse, should be herself a trained and certificated nurse, having in addition to such special training, training in the duties of a Matron, and that such training should not only be technical, but also ethical. She should be able to handle men and women.

In small Workhouses requiring a Superintendent Nurse the office might be combined.

It should be noted that it is no more necessary that the Matron should be the wife of the Master than that the Superintendent Nurse should be the wife of the Doctor, or the Matron of an infirmary separate from the Workhouse should be the wife of the Medical Superintendent:

In those Workhouses where a Superintendent Nurse is required, the adoption of the most excellent Rules of the Scotch Local Government Board would be of inestimable benefit.

They are as follows :—

Rules and Regulations for the Management of Hospitals and Infirmarys in Poorhouses where a trained Head Nurse or Lady Superintendent is employed.

The following Rules and Regulations shall come into operation when the appointment of a trained Head Nurse or Lady Superintendent, together with a statement of her salary, age, and previous experience has been reported to the Board of Supervision, and the Board have expressed themselves satisfied as to her fitness for the responsible duties of the office.

1. The Matron of the Poorhouse shall have no jurisdiction within the Hospital, and she shall exercise no authority therein; neither shall she be held responsible in any way for its condition as to cleanliness, or the condition of the patients as to their persons, bedding, or clothing.



2. The position of the trained Head Nurse or Lady Superintendent of the Hospital shall be the same in all respects, in relation to the House Governor, as that of the Matron of the Poorhouse to the House Governor as regards ordinary inmates ; and the Lady Superintendent shall be guided in the discharge of her duties, and in the management of the Hospital, by the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Supervision for the Management of Poorhouses, in so far as they can be applied, and she shall conform to any additional Rules which may be deemed necessary by the House Committee and approved by the said Board.

3. It shall be her duty to superintend the nurses employed in the Hospital, suspending and reporting to the Governor any who may be found insubordinate, inefficient, or otherwise unsuitable.

4. She shall take charge of the property of the Parochial Board (or Combination) within the Hospital, and check damage, waste, and extravagance.

5. She shall take charge of all ordinary inmates employed in the Hospital, pointing out to them their duties, and reporting to the Governor in case of their disobedience or insubordination.

6. She shall maintain discipline, cleanliness, and order within the Hospital.

7. She shall conform to the instructions of the Medical Officer as to the treatment of patients, and as to all matters affecting the dietary and hygiene of the Hospital.

8. In all other matters she shall obey the Regulations of the Hospital and the lawful orders of the House Governor.

Would not the adoption and enforcement of these Rules by the English Local Government Board define the position of the Head Nurse or Lady Superintendent and make the working of the present Nursing Order more satisfactory ?

Surely there is no need to emphasise the injustice

of demanding evidence of definite training and knowledge from nurses and then placing them under untrained authority.

The appointment of female inspectors, the enforcement of a rule that the Matrons of all Workhouses should be definitely trained as Matrons, with additional training as nurses when their appointments are to Workhouses where there are no Superintendent Nurses, or where the appointments might be combined, would inevitably result in incalculable benefit to the nurses and the sick ; but they should be supplementary, not in place of, a definite system of training and certification as suggested in the early part of this paper.

It would be useless to attempt to induce this Conference to express their approval and adherence to these schemes and suggestions by any personal persuasion. If you can be induced to support them it will only be by the unimpeachable evidence you must all have of the absolute necessity for alteration in the existing conditions.

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Mr BOUSFIELD then called on Dr Maurice to read his paper.

## THE BEST MEANS OF PROVIDING AND TRAINING NURSES FOR THE INDOOR POOR.

BY DR BLAKE MAURICE, J.P.,

*Guardian and late Medical Officer of the Marlborough Union.*

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IN the first place my thanks are due to the Committee of the Central Poor Law Conferences for the honour they have done me in asking me to read a paper before so influential a gathering as I see around me, on the important and interesting question of the difficulties of obtaining nurses in rural Workhouses. I had great hesitation in complying with the request, feeling I had

not the ability to deal with the question—a question with which many others, I believe, have dealt, and at which no solution has been arrived. I fear I also shall fail; but if I can shed one ray of light or make any suggestion which may tend towards the advancement of the question, even ever so little, I feel I am only doing a pleasant duty for the benefit of the poor, sick, and aged, in our rural Workhouses. I am not concerned with the larger Workhouse Infirmaries. They, with their matrons, staff of nurses, and probationers, are fully able to meet the demand made upon them—indeed, the working of many of our larger Infirmaries is equal to, if not better than, many of the general hospitals. The rural Workhouses present many difficulties. Here we are confronted at the outset with a difficulty arising from the nature of the work. By far the larger number of the patients in a rural Workhouse are aged and infirm people, suffering from chronic ailments and requiring the assistance indispensable in extreme old age. From a nurse's point of view they are the least interesting, often the most thankless, and always the most trying, while there are no professional interests to alleviate the drudgery.

Nursing as a profession is in the present day widely embraced. Persons of all classes are eager to enter, and though many who put their hands to the plough turn back, a large proportion are willing to undergo the drudgery of two or three years' training, owing to the higher possibilities the profession offers them, and the prizes that may be won. But they are not the class of nurses that gravitate to the rural Workhouses.

To meet the difficulty some persons are in favour of appointing a matron who has been a trained nurse, and of allowing her to be responsible for the nursing, with some partly trained assistant under her. Now, although I think it is a great advantage to have a matron who is experienced in nursing, I do not think it is an ideal state, for this reason: The first duty of



the nurse should be to attend to the sick. After the long hours of the night, they require the first attention ; they ought to be changed, cleaned, and made comfortable before breakfast. The matron has all the household duties to see to, and therefore cannot possibly give her first attention to the sick, and the duty will therefore fall into less experienced hands. And again, the matron, if she has been a trained nurse, has been through all the drudgery of the nursing work ; she has raised her position, and is not likely willingly to return to the arduous duties of nursing.

Some are in favour of procuring nurses from the larger Infirmaries, and that seems a somewhat feasible idea ; but we must remember that the nurses trained in these institutions naturally look forward to improving their position in the more interesting work of those larger centres, and only those who find a difficulty in securing promotion, who are, in fact, comparative failures, are likely to seek posts in the rural Workhouses. Of course there are the probationers. Some of them, no doubt, might be caught by the idea of becoming more independent in their position and under less personal supervision, and might for that reason be ready to embrace the post of nurse in the smaller rural Workhouses ; but they are only young persons. Are they suitable for the work ? Are we justified in placing such young persons to do the many unpleasant duties which must be done, more especially in the male wards—work which ought rather to be done by more elderly women ? I think not.

Another source from which a suitable class might be found is in the manner district nurses are found. Here some benevolent persons subscribe together, send some suitably selected person, probably some one of mature years, it might be perhaps some widow—send her for a few months' training to some hospital. And for ordinary nursing, if you get the right person, this may work very well, Boards of Guardians, of course,

might do the same ; but here you are met by this difficulty—How long can you retain the services of such a nurse ? And whilst on the one hand it is an act of private charity to train the nurse, on the other it would fall upon the rates. Will Boards of Guardians be willing to incur the recurring expense of such training, to say nothing of the difficulty which would also arise during an interregnum ? If you could secure such a nurse from this class somewhat experienced, it would do very well for all the ordinary nursing of sick, aged, and infirm persons, and the difficulty of any acute case could be met by an admirable suggestion of Mr Baldwin Fleming, that all Boards of Guardians should subscribe to some good nursing institute, which in case of need would supply a trained nurse, and all rural Workhouses should keep a room ready for the use of such nurses. The need of such a nurse will, however, become less and less owing to the increasing number of cottage hospitals. In my district we should not think of treating a serious case in the Infirmary—we should take it to the Savernake Cottage Hospital, to which the Guardians are yearly subscribers.

I must now consider another point. Nurses we must have, and we will presuppose that from one of these sources we have got one for the day ; but what about the night ? The infirm require the attention of a nurse equally by day and night. One nurse cannot do both, and for patients to remain in a neglected condition for some hours of the night may undo all that has been accomplished by the nurse's care during the day. At present, in some Workhouses the inmates are dependent upon what help they can get from their companions. How can you expect much help or assistance from those nearly as helpless as themselves ? How can you expect old and infirm people to turn out of bed on a cold winter's night to help others when they are themselves in almost as much need ? I fear this additional expense will not be pleasant reading to

some Boards of Guardians, but it is my conviction, and I am bound to record it, that nursing to be of real good must be thorough. And again I do not think it would entail any great expense. I do not want a skilled nurse—I want rather a night-watcher. Her duties should be to make periodical visits to the wards during the night, and a tell-tale would be provided to record her visits. Think what an advantage it would be to some poor creature who is unable to move in bed, to one who requires, it may be only a cup of cold water, or some other help, to have some one to assist him rather than to wait the long hours of the night through until morning—some one who, if need be, could call the nurse. It would also be a great protection in case of fire, when time might be gained, and time would be most essential in removing the bedridden persons to safety. It would also protect from a calamity which I once remember, when an old man was found dead on his face in the morning by the side of his bed, having evidently fallen out in his endeavours to assist himself. I do not believe, however, that this suggestion will be received in the manner it might have been some years ago. Boards of Guardians are much more humane and much more alive to the duties they owe to the poor, sick, and aged, than they were a few years ago.

You will say I have suggested three alternatives, and thrown cold water on all. It is so. To my mind none of them are ideal. Briefly stated the difficulty of providing nurses is this: The ordinary hospital nurse will not enter so unattractive a profession, and if a lower class could be found the even partial training they require seems to present insuperable difficulties. They would be a class probably unsympathetic. How long would they do the work? They would be here to-day, and gone to-morrow. There are, however, to be found women doing work equally unattractive and more onerous among the poor of the great towns from strong religious motives, and it is



not impossible that a similar motive might avail to supply the want of nursing in the rural Workhouse wards. None of the stigma which might attach to the name of the Workhouse nurse could attach to the members of a body who under a strong sense of devotion had undertaken to provide the infirm and aged poor with the attention and care that their condition requires. The establishment of such an institution would be a work of time, nor could it be called into existence by the fiat of a Board. The personal influence and enthusiasm of a founder could alone give the vital spark. If such could be found, a central institute might be established, and a system of periodical relief, and a return for a time of rest to a Home would give a feeling of unity and *esprit de corps* sufficient to maintain the body.

The whole character of such an institution makes it necessary that its origin should be in private benevolence, and the expenses of management would be to a great extent covered by the payment of Boards of Guardians who availed themselves of their services. The scheme in itself may be in the highest degree visionary, and objections may present themselves; but a Central Home, a kind of Sisterhood of Poor Law Infirmary Nurses, with a simple uniform and no pronounced religious sect, appears to me the only source from which we might obtain the class of nurse who would undertake in a really kind and sympathetic manner the nursing of these cases, which, though unattractive in the details of nursing, are none the less objects worthy of our kind consideration.

I must not detain you any longer, but before I conclude I should like to say a few words on nursing generally. You who are present here to-day show by your presence that you are interested in the work, and it may be that my few remarks may fall into the hands of others, and if I can kindle in their minds

some enthusiasm for a nursing scheme I may not have spoken in vain.

Few, if any, of us here present are not alive to the importance of nursing, and we can none of us tell how soon we may need it ourselves. Individual nursing is of course a luxury which cannot be accorded to all, but it should be our duty and our pleasure to afford sufficient and good nursing to the poor, aged, and sick, who, after a life of hard work—some through no fault of their own, others no doubt from want of thrift and other causes—find themselves towards the end of life helpless wrecks dependent on the charity of others.

Times no doubt are altering and will alter. With such sick societies as we now possess, based on a sound financial footing, together with advancing education, more and more will avail themselves of the benefits of such societies, and free themselves from the disgrace of pauperism; but we have yet a large number of the older generation who, from want of knowledge and from having entered societies founded upon absolutely rotten systems, are now dependent upon the rates. They must be provided for. There are some, a minority, the privileged few, who never need a nurse, who pass through life, and fade away suddenly at the end without knowing suffering. They represent those, so well described by Mrs Barbauld, who, when thinking of the time the life and the body had been together, through pleasant days and cloudy weather, and though fully realising the wrench it would be to part from those who were dear, still thinks a sudden call a happy one, when she says, addressing life—

“Steal away, give little warning,  
Choose thine own time;  
Say not ‘Good-night,’ but in some brighter clime  
Bid me ‘Good-morning.’”

But there is still the larger majority who may spend weeks, months, it may be years, upon a bed of sick-

ness—it may be in the weary condition of old age or other ailments, or suffering from some acute disease, it may be fever, with the muttering delirium so well described by our great dramatist, when he says—

“The life of all his blood  
Is touched corruptibly : and his pure brain  
(Which some suppose the soul’s frail dwelling-house)  
Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,  
Foretell the ending of mortality.”

To all such a nurse is indispensable. To move the position, to moisten the lips, to smooth the ruffled pillow, she is a necessity which it is our duty to provide for all who are dependent upon us, remembering that, be it Peer or be it Pauper, all need some one at the close of life to comfort and to help them, at that time when each and all must make the great change from the known to the unknown, from the mortal to immortality.

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### DISCUSSION.

Lady BAKER (Dorsetshire) said that for five or six years she had wrestled practically with the question, having been Secretary of the County Nursing Association, and during that time one Board after another had come to her to provide them with nurses. It was forced upon her very strongly that there were not enough nurses in this country to meet the demand. There might be enough trained nurses, but not enough ordinary nurses, for as they all knew there were two grades of nurses—one trained and competent to deal with disease in its most acute forms, able to understand the cause of disease and how to grapple with it ; and another class of nurse capable of dealing with the common everyday diseases which any good motherly woman could understand. In London she had again and again got some highly trained nurse and appointed her to a country Union, only to feel afterwards that it was a waste of the woman’s time and skill to set her to tend a lot of paupers. She had felt it was a shame to bring such women into the country, and that they should not be called upon to perform the drudgery of a rural Workhouse Infirmary, where there was what nurses called “a good case” not once a year, and where they complained that their time and skill and prospects were entirely thrown away. It occurred to her some seven or eight years ago that some of the money expended on technical education ought to be devoted to scholarships for nurses.



She was told that the Technical Education Act did not apply to nursing, although it applied to dairy work, carpentry, agricultural work, and heaven only knew what besides. After great exertion she succeeded in getting some money for scholarships, and the women who had received it had done remarkably well. (Cheers.) They were all bound to work in the county for three years; and in one case the Guardians maintained the two children of a young widow while she was trained in nursing, and the woman was now doing well, getting a good living for herself and her children. (Cheers.) One county after another got permission, and now there were such grants in fourteen or fifteen of the English counties. The auditors raised a difficulty on the ground that the County Councils had no power to train women for professions. She (the speaker) referred the point to various members of the Local Government Board and others, and the result was this formula, which should be written in letters of gold for those who were anxious to extend the training of nurses, that they might devote a portion of the technical education grant "*to train local or county women in the principles of nursing as applicable to district and infirmary work.*" (Cheers.) But she was not allowed merely "to train nurses." (Laughter.) In the form she had just given, any County Council or Technical Committee might confidently ask for money to train women in nursing. That was a record of facts which she thought might prove serviceable to the Conference. (Cheers.) The candidates must be "county women" in each case—usually widows or women of a certain age; and they were trained in the county first, and afterwards went to London for their maternity training, and the result was they had "county women" for the "county work." (Cheers.)

Mr DUNCAN MILLIGAN (Wandsworth and Clapham) said he congratulated the Conference on having such excellent papers on nursing. He would confine himself to Miss Wilkie's paper, remarking that Halifax should be proud to have such a Matron. He was glad to say that not only had Miss Wilkie very properly pointed out that it was necessary to have a woman who was well up in the duties of nursing and the oversight of nurses, but an excellent and perfect woman in other respects. (Hear, hear.) Miss Wilkie had, in fact, pointed to too dizzy and superlative a height of excellence, one they might never be able to attain to. Still, the direction was the right one, and every one would be glad if they arrived only half-way there. It was to be inferred from the papers that there were really lonely and neglected invalids in some of the Unions, attended by selfish and careless and unsympathetic hands. He did not think that any Guardian at that Conference would admit that that applied to his particular Union. He did, however, entirely endorse Miss Wilkie's opinion that if there was such a state of affairs it should be put an end to at once. (Cheers.) It was very desirable that those who were entrusted with the care of the sick should have not only skill and training, but a natural affection for

the office of nursing. It should be their real vocation. It must have taken more than pounds, shillings, and pence to make some of the young women with whom he was acquainted take up nursing in Workhouse Infirmaries. (Cheers.) In his own Union they had instruction in surgical nursing, and he had had the pleasure of distributing the certificates annually. (Hear, hear.)

Dr RHODES (Chorlton) said that as a member of the Chorlton Board, one of the largest Unions in England, and as Chairman of the Northern Workhouse Nursing Association, he had had a great deal of experience, both as regards the large and the small Unions. There was at the present time a dearth of nurses as regards the smaller Unions, but there was no reason to get hysterical about it. (Hear, hear.) There was a return in the *Poor Law Officers' Journal* showing that 2,700 trained nurses were employed in 1891, and 4,100 in 1897 in the same Unions, an enormous increase, and he ventured to say that this was a question of the law of supply and demand, and that the remedy was in the Guardians' own hands. (Hear, hear.) The army had been referred to. The army got all they wanted although they did not train nurses. Why did they get nurses? Because they paid a proper price. (Cheers.) It was not very long ago since he saw an advertisement for a trained nurse at the magnificent sum of £18 a year. If a Workhouse nurse merely cured a patient she had half failed in her duty, because she should see that the men or women who came into the Workhouse Infirmary went out better men and women, and anxious to avoid the causes which brought them there before. (Hear, hear.) Miss Wilkie advocated the payment of premiums by probationers. He differed from her as strongly as he possibly could. Some of the very best candidates were too poor to pay premiums, and he had known serious trouble caused by premiums. He hoped that the Conference would in no way encourage premiums in Workhouses. (Hear, hear.) It had been said, "What does a probationer do?" Why, from the very day she went into an Infirmary she earned her money. With regard to the Central Authority, some people had more faith in the Central Authority than he had. He believed that if they would give nurses proper accommodation, proper food—and no blame attached to the Local Government Board in this respect—good clothing, and pay them enough, there would soon be an adequate supply of nurses. (Cheers.) In regard to what had been said about Scotch Workhouses, he was rather doubtful if Miss Wilkie had visited a Scotch Workhouse. He had—he always made a point of going to Workhouses wherever he saw them, and he always got his discharge from the Scotch Workhouses as soon as possible. (Laughter.) There was nothing to be hysterical about in the question of the supply of nurses. If Guardians would pay them, feed them, clothe them, and house them properly, and treat them as ladies, they would get as many as they required. (Cheers.)

Mr JOHN BROWN (Mile End Old Town) said it was eight years



since they had their first probationer nurse at Mile End Infirmary. They had now given certificates to upwards of sixty nurses, and had trained large numbers, and it had not interfered with the working of the institution in the least degree. On one occasion an East Anglian Board asked permission to send some young women to the Mile End Infirmary to be trained in nursing, so pleased they were with what had been done by the Mile End nurses. The Board had often grieved over the loss of their probationers, and did not see their way to accede to the request. He agreed with Dr Rhodes that the remedy in the towns at any rate was with the Guardians themselves. The probationers at Mile End received £12 a year from the moment they entered the Infirmary. Their present Matron was trained in the Mile End Infirmary. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs WETHERALL (Bishop Stortford) said she came there from a very small Workhouse where three or four years ago there was only one trained nurse in the infirmary. One difficulty was that nurses did not consider nursing for a Workhouse quite as smart as nursing for an hospital. Another was that they were frequently asked by young women, "What kind of a certificate shall I receive when I leave?" It was a question of supply and demand, as Dr Rhodes said. If nurses found they could get a useful certificate at the end of their training, they would take up the work. They had a very good Matron now, but the certificate was only like the "character" that any private employer would give a cook or housemaid. Nurses should be placed more under the doctor and not independent of him; they would then get proper certificates when they left, and Guardians would be able to get plenty of young women as probationers. She did not think her own neighbourhood was ripe for such a school as had been suggested. Many of the Unions had no trained nurses at all, and the Unions would not combine.

Sir EDMUND VERNEY (Buckingham) said that if any one wanted to see what a dreary old-fashioned Union was like they should go to Buckingham. He could not agree with those who said there should be second-rate nurses in Workhouses. There should be no such thing anywhere as second-rate nurses. Wishing to make a practical contribution to the debate he inserted an advertisement in the daily papers for a Workhouse nurse:—

NURSE, trained and certificated, wanted for a small country Workhouse Infirmary. Must be under thirty-five years of age. Good salary, comfortable accommodation, excellent food, and work not excessive. For further particulars send name and address only, &c.

The first post brought twenty replies — (laughter) — (which he handed to the Chairman). He hoped that any one who wanted a Workhouse Infirmary nurse would avail himself of the information in the replies. There was a chance for any Guardian who said he could not get a nurse, twenty young women under thirty-five years of age burning to come. (Laughter.)



Mr ASKEW (Sculcoates) said his Board had had no difficulty in getting nurses since they had undertaken the training of them. He altogether disagreed with the idea of graded nurses. There should be only one class of nurse, and that the first class, and they should be properly paid for their services. (Hear, hear.) The papers read that afternoon had been exceedingly interesting. The paper of Miss Wilkie came up to his ideal on the whole. The second paper rather foreshadowed not the best but the worst means of providing nurses for Poor Law institutions. He took exception to the observations of Miss Wilkie as to premiums. He agreed with Dr Rhodes that they should not take premiums from these young people, but should pay them from the beginning of their work. (Hear, hear.) He did not agree that their services should be given without remuneration. (Hear, hear.) He quite agreed with Miss Wilkie that there should be some better system of granting certificates, and he thought that there might be examinations in each district by independent medical men whose certificates would be valuable to the candidates. The nursing difficulty was chiefly felt in the rural Unions, and he was almost inclined to appeal for wider powers from the Local Government Board to enable them to bring the nursing arrangements in rural Unions up to date. (Hear, hear.) There were too many Guardians not of the poor but of the poor rates, and the sooner such misrepresentation was ended the better it would be for the sick poor. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. HENRY TAYLOR (St Albans) said he would like to express his obligation to the readers of the papers. In discussing such questions they were exposed to the danger of unnecessarily increasing officialism in Poor Law affairs. He was simply appalled as he observed its immense growth, and the vast amount of money which went not to the poor but to the officials. However, officials were necessary. The Local Government Board Inspector drew his Board's attention to the night-nursing arrangements, and the fact that the work practically devolved upon pauper wardsmen and wardswomen. On the men's side the wardsmen were two convalescent *delirium tremens* cases, another wardsmen had *locomotor ataxy*, while a fourth was minus an arm, and used a hook for lifting patients. ("Shame.") On the female side, one wardswoman was mad, another imbecile, and a third walked on crutches. It was a scandal that such things should be, and at any cost the nursing arrangements must be perfected throughout the country. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CROTCH (Norwich) said he had no doubt that there were present several members of School Boards who would know that in 1870 there was a state of things, as regards teachers, similar to the Poor Law nursing position of to-day. The result was a scheme which was issued by the Education Department. (Cries of "Question," which the speaker effectually silenced by the retort, "Gentlemen, if you are so impatient at home I don't wonder your affairs are not

properly carried on.") The same plan should now be adopted in the nursing world. Let each Union train at least one probationer, and let them be periodically examined at a centre by the Local Government Board Medical Officers, whose certificates would be of far greater value than anything else a nurse could have. When the nursing orders were issued by the Local Government Board, the Norwich Guardians tried to get the Norfolk Hospital to train probationers but they would not, and now the nurses attended the lectures for Hospital probationers. He appealed to the Conference to support the Norwich petition for the examination of Poor Law nurses by the Local Government Board. (Hear, hear.)

MISS BAKER (Holborn) said that this was the sixteenth of these Conferences she had attended. (Hear, hear.) But she had never heard a paper which gave her so much satisfaction as Miss Wilkie's. She emphatically denied that inferior nursing was good enough for Workhouses. They had no right as public bodies to flood the community with semi-trained nurses, to serve their time and drift to the large towns where they would be trying for engagements at two guineas a week. Some of those present at the Conference seemed afraid that they would never get an Infirmary nurse properly trained. They used to hear the same kind of thing about the Metropolitan Asylums Board Hospitals, but as soon as they got a trained Matron they got trained nurses. (Hear, hear.) The thing they needed was a trained Matron; that was the crux of the question, for they would never get skilled women to work under unskilled heads. At one time she remembered that the nurses were to report to the Matron of the Workhouse, and in her absence to the Master, and the nurses naturally objected to that kind of thing. What the Local Government Board should do was to lay down a system of training, and after a two or three years' course of it the nurses should be examined by a medical man of recognised status, whose certificate would enable a nurse to go wherever highly-trained nursing was required. (Hear, hear.)

MISS CATHERINE WOOD (formerly Lady Superintendent of the Children's Hospital, Great Ormond Street, London, W.C.) said that the difficulty of getting nurses applied almost entirely to the country Unions and to those urban Workhouses where the Infirmary was not a separate department. She trusted the Local Government Board would schedule certain places as schools of nursing. Until the larger Unions were compelled by law to train nurses for the smaller ones so long would this difficulty occur. The Local Government Board must also be asked to define the position of nurse. As the Consolidated Orders now stood, the nurse and Workhouse Matron were mixed up together, because at the time the Orders were made there were no trained nurses. There were actually Workhouses at the present time where the selection of the nurse was left not to the Doctor and the Matron of the Infirmary, but to the Nursing Committee. She was sorry to hear any one in that room say that nurses



did not care to go to the Unions because there were no "interesting cases." It was not correct. They would be glad to go if they were treated as nurses, and not as the understudy of the Workhouse Matron. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BEAVAN (Cardiff) said there was great merit in both papers, but he did not agree with the main arguments in Miss Wilkie's. They should not go back to centralisation if they could avoid it. He strongly deprecated asking the Local Government Board to institute a central system of training nurses. (Hear, hear.) There was no necessity for it. He quite agreed with Dr Rhodes that they need not be in a panic about it. Even in the time of the Maidstone typhoid epidemic there was no scarcity of nurses wherever reasonable remuneration was offered. (Hear, hear.) Country Unions complained that they could not get nurses, but what salaries were they offering? The profession was by no means overstocked. It was also hardly the thing to suggest that Guardians should contribute towards a system over which they would have little or no control. The Cardiff Guardians endeavoured to deal generously with the probationers, and gave them £10 for the first year, £12 the second year, and £18 the third year; and then, if they had earned it, a certificate which would take them anywhere in the country; and during their training they attended weekly lectures which resulted in the greatest progress being made by the nurses. They thought they had solved the problem. (Hear, hear.)

Mr LAWSON (Leeds) said they had fifty-three nurses, and had never found any difficulty in getting persons for the position. They had during the day listened to a perfect outburst of indignation against the Local Government Board, but if the changes advocated by Miss Wilkie were carried out the position of Guardians would be ten times worse than it was at the present time. (Hear, hear.) Boards having separate Infirmaries should be in a position to issue certificates which should be accepted throughout the whole country. (Hear, hear.) He would not give the power of granting certificates to Boards which were not of sufficient importance to have a separate Infirmary. (Hear, hear.) Miss Wilkie advocated that persons who were to be appointed Matrons of Workhouses should be trained in nursing. That was a thing which would come about gradually as time went on, for experience showed that the nurses became engaged to the other officials, and, marrying, took the positions of Master and Matron, thus the desired reform would be brought about. It was a matter that would remedy itself. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Sir Edmund Verney had shown that there were plenty of candidates for situations as nurse if only they were offered sufficient remuneration. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN said he understood that Canon Denton (Ashby-de-la-Zouch) wished to rise to a point of order.

Rev. Canon DENTON said that he understood that Sir Edmund Verney had issued an imaginary advertisement, not a *bona fide* one,



for nurses — an anonymous advertisement which had attracted a certain number of replies. If such was the case, every member of the Conference would, he felt sure, utterly and from his heart repudiate such a transaction. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN (examining the packet which Sir Edmund Verney had placed on his desk) said the advertisement purported to be inserted by "N. W., care of George Dawson & Sons, Craven Street, Strand." He did not think it was quite the kind of advertisement that would emanate from an official source, but they could not reprobate too strongly the insertion of an advertisement which had had the effect of bringing replies from a considerable number of nurses, who had they known the circumstances of the case would certainly not have written. (Hear, hear.) It ought to go forth from that Conference that they strongly denounced the course taken in issuing such an advertisement. (Cheers.)

Sir Edmund Verney had left the Hall previous to the point of order being raised, and the incident closed.

Sister EDITH KERRISON (West Ham) said that in that Union they now wanted eight nurses and could not get them. It was not a pecuniary question. Contact with the pauper attendants had a great deterrent effect, for the nurses felt that it was not right to leave any part of the work of nursing to pauper attendants. That was the one black spot at present in the nursing of the sick poor. Often, as one of the speakers stated, the paupers were very helpless and not at all able to do their duties. When Guardians and nurses took upon themselves the care of the sick poor it was their duty to give them the very best attention. She did not believe in two grades of nurses. Nursing was the highest vocation a woman could follow, and no true nurse felt there was anything menial or disgraceful about any part of it. (Cheers.) They heard complaints about the Local Government Board interfering. She would be very glad if the Local Government Board would interfere a little more, and strengthen the hands of nurses by saying to the Guardians, "You must not employ pauper attendants in the nursing of the sick poor." (Hear, hear.) The pauper attendant was the one weak point of the present system. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. R. H. HART-DAVIS (Henley-on-Thames) said that the nursing problem was very different in the towns from that in the country. His Union was a very small and decreasing one, and a fully qualified and certificated nurse would not as a rule stay at Henley very long. Still they had now had a thoroughly good nurse for some years. Any central institution for training nurses would be looked upon with suspicion by Guardians. However, a remedy might be found in setting aside one or more Unions in each county according to the size and requirements of the district as a thoroughly equipped Infirmary where there would be the best possible nursing and where the poor could be properly looked after. There was nothing in the argument that the poor would not like to go a distance to the

Infirmary, seeing how far they now travelled for treatment at the county Hospitals. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HARRY BEVIR (Cricklade and Wootton Bassett) said the difficulty which had been discussed was not in any way the difficulty of the large institutions which were fully equipped, but that of the small Unions. Miss Wilkie had set before them a very high ideal. Dr Maurice had taken a more practical view. (Hear, hear.) If a highly trained nurse came to a Union her time and abilities were to a very great extent wasted, for a comparatively unskilled person could do the work equally well, especially as Guardians were only too ready to send difficult cases to institutions where they could be treated by specialists. Workhouse nursing in small Unions was a difficulty and would remain a difficulty. While they must all of them deprecate the employment of paupers as nurses, it was impracticable to set before them an ideal that no nurse should be employed in Poor Law work unless she bore the highest certificates. (Hear, hear.)

It was resolved that the paper be printed in the official report.

The CHAIRMAN mentioned that Lady Lothian had put on paper some remarks which she would have asked leave to address to the Conference had she been able to be present.

The paper is as follows :—

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUPPLY OF WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY NURSES.

By CONSTANCE, MARCHIONESS OF LOTHIAN.

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THERE can be no doubt as to the benevolent and enlightened feeling with regard to the care of the 60,000 sick poor in our Workhouses, and of their efficient nursing, shown in the General Order on Workhouse Nursing issued by the Local Government Board to Guardians in the autumn of 1897. It has been in force for more than a year, and a careful perusal of the Reports of Local Government Inspectors for the year 1897 to 1898 enables us to form some idea as to whether all its provisions can be practically carried out, and if the desired reforms are being actually accomplished. Increased accommodation for the sick has in several instances been liberally granted, and Superintendents appointed, and it is satisfactory to find that there has been little difficulty in finding proper persons to fill those posts, but

in nearly all the Reports it is observed, with regret, that there is a very great lack of trained Assistants or of suitable persons to train. This difficulty must render some of the provisions of the Order ineffectual, and exceptions have to be made in many cases to the rules. There is, for instance, a strenuous effort made to abolish *all* pauper nursing, and to insist that all Assistants be paid; but in the dearth of qualified Nurses, the employment of Wards people becomes a necessity, and has to be sanctioned, when carried on under a Superintendent, and approved by the Medical Officer. Again, the Order prescribes that no Assistant will be employed "unless he or she has had such training and practical experience in nursing as shall render him or her a fit and proper person to undertake it," but this need not apply in the case where there is a Superintendent. In Article V. cases of emergency are dealt with, when the Master may engage Nurses temporarily. Such emergency, in the dearth of trained assistance, may not unfrequently arise.

How to obtain Assistants and untrained Probationers to train, how to train them, how to keep them when trained, are problems yet unsolved, and which require much earnest consideration.

The Order seems based on the idea that under a Superintendent a Workhouse may become a good training-school for Nurses. It is my firm belief that, except in the large Infirmaries, this is not the case, and this is the opinion of many of those most experienced in the training of Nurses. There is no variety in the cases of illness, no medical school, no possibility (as was experienced at Norwich) of attending classes. For learning the technical work, for order, for discipline, or for experience, training in a Workhouse cannot for a moment be compared to that in a general Hospital. In admitting untrained workers into the wards at all, a risk is run of dangerous blunders being



made, and until good habits of order are formed, it will be difficult to keep them from what is called the "Workhouse taint." How unfit untaught young girls must be to be placed in the men's wards I need hardly enlarge upon.

A cause of the difficulty of obtaining Nurses for Workhouses is that there is at present no hope of advance in the service, or the remotest chance for any one if trained only in Workhouses, of promotion at any time to the highest posts ; training in a Hospital for three years being required as a necessary qualification for the post of Superintendent by the Order. There are other causes, which are mentioned in the Reports, such as the unattractive nature of the work in remote country Workhouses, and the want of consideration sometimes shown about overwork, isolation, and monotony, which will have to be borne in mind as deterrent influences.

A solution of some of these difficulties I venture to suggest. Judging by the success, under difficult conditions, of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association for many years, and the excellent staff of Nurses it was able to get together, perhaps some plan of the same kind might be adopted with the co-operation of Boards of Guardians. Regulations with regard to officials, which are now modified, made it difficult to avoid all friction, but the position of the Nurses became much respected, their services valued, and their attachment to the Association a very lasting one, and a remarkable stride was made in the improvement of Workhouse Nursing.

For several reasons, one of which was the difficulty of supplying gratuitous training by a voluntary Association to the very large number of Nurses now required, and also that of ensuring their promotion under the new regulations, the work on those exact lines could not be continued. However, much that was good in principle could be retained if a similar

work could be taken up by Boards of Guardians and approved by the Local Government Board.

The principles of the Association seemed well thought out, and were tested by the experience of many years. One primary object was to establish the principle of very careful and deliberate selection of candidates for training by a thorough investigation into all matters connected with their antecedents, their characters, and their capabilities. A superior set of young women were attracted to the work, as they valued the careful selection which was made, not as in an emergency, when it may be a necessity to make a selection of some kind.

There might be an Association, formed of Delegates from Boards of Guardians and others interested in the work, for the Training of Nurses, approved by the Local Government Board, with, I think, the prospect of great success. There should be a Central Office, where candidates should present themselves, and after selection made by the secretaries, the nomination for training made by a Committee, and signatures to Agreement obtained. The Probationers should then be entered into a Training-School at some general Hospital or large Infirmary for the length of time required by the Local Government Board, which possibly might not all be taken at once. On receiving a certificate of efficiency after training, possibly part, or the whole, expense of the training might be refunded to the Association, as a number of valuable public servants would have been furnished to the country. They would then be eligible by Guardians for posts as Trained Nurses. Care might be taken by the Association to recommend for remote country Workhouses those Nurses who, though efficient, might be glad, from having had much hard work, of lighter employment. It might also be arranged that the time in one place should not be too long ; and regulations might be made with the

Guardians and the Local Government Board as to hours of recreation and exercise and times of vacation. It might be advisable, too, that no member of the Association should be dismissed without the assent of the Local Government Board.

The personal and careful choice of Probationers, the good training, the continued interest shown by Associates, and the good-fellowship with other Nurses, might all help to give encouragement to many both to join and to remain in the ranks. The yearly social meeting, making a break from Workhouse surroundings, the care and attention shown in illness and convalescence by members of the Association, tend to lessen the isolation and monotony of the lives of the Nurses, and to keep up something of an *esprit de corps* among them, which is of great value in raising the tone among Workhouse officials.

The position of Nurses in Workhouses is very much more regarded than it was, but it is not yet as satisfactory or encouraging as it might be to respectable young women, and the failure of the Workhouse Nursing Association to continue the work of training will affect it in no small degree. The experience of nearly twenty years has shown that good training, certainty of employment, and the protection and countenance of such an Association as I have shadowed out, do form very strong inducements to young nurses. There should be, moreover, within the range of an ambitious imagination, a possibility of promotion to the highest posts—as it were, a Marshal's baton in the knapsack of the young recruit. Above all may be valued, an opening into an honourable and devoted career, thus made more accessible to those who would undertake the work, however arduous and trying, from motives akin to the spirit of Florence Nightingale and Agnes Jones.

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The CHAIRMAN said he would like to express his deep sympathy with the movement for the improvement of Workhouse nursing, which had gone on for many years, and no such Conference could be held without grateful recognition of the noble services rendered to this cause by Miss Louisa Twining, Miss Talbot, and others, who had given their time and money ungrudgingly to the work of training women for Workhouse nursing. (Cheers.) The Northern Workhouse Nursing Association and other bodies had also done good work. The work was done in one respect, for a far higher standard of nursing was now insisted upon than was the case only a few years ago, and he could not help thinking that, though they had passed no resolution that day, the discussion would have the effect of causing further improvements in the nursing arrangements in the Unions throughout the country. (Cheers.) The expense could not fairly be borne by private individuals, and the petition which was awaiting their signature hit the nail on the head when it said in effect that the onus of finding a remedy should in future rest upon the Local Government Board. (Hear, hear.) Both the papers were full of knowledge and full of sympathy, and would tend to raise the standard of Workhouse nursing throughout the country. (Cheers.) The Conference then adjourned.

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FRIDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY.

The Earl Beauchamp took the chair.

Rev. Dr Cox (Chairman of the Brixworth Board) read the following paper on "Old Age Pensions and the Poor Law":—

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

By REV. J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.,

*Chairman of the Brixworth Board of Guardians.*

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FOR over twenty years or more, England has been discussing and re-discussing certain schemes of State insurance or of national endowment of old age, which should secure for the workers some moderate provision in old age, and which should be wide enough in operation to enable us to dispense with, or change the character of a large portion of our present system of poor relief.

The credit of first giving the notion definite and detailed shape belongs to Canon Blackley, who put forth his original proposals in November 1878. To Mr Charles Booth, however, belongs the far greater credit of producing a scheme on possible and popular lines. Though it is not likely that his original proposals can ever be adopted in their entirety, no thinking person can deny that it is mainly due to Mr Booth's infinite pains and quiet insistence that the question of old age pensions is now within the range of practical politics.

A Select Committee of the House of Commons took evidence on the subject of State pensions in 1885, 1886, and 1887, and presented a report in the last-named year.

In January 1893, a Royal Commission on the Aged Poor was nominated. They issued their report, with minutes of evidence, in three volumes, in the spring of 1895.

At the last general election the leading statesmen of both our great political parties, as well as most of the rank and file of Parliament candidates, gave the greatest prominence in their addresses and speeches to the endowment of old age.

On 21st July 1896, a Treasury Minute appointed a Committee of eight "experts," presided over by Lord Rothschild, to report on "old age pensions." Their report, together with the evidence on which it was based, was dated 7th June 1898. In those two years they succeeded in examining eleven witnesses, giving a day to each. Their report was completely abortive, for they condemned every scheme submitted to them, and expressed themselves incapable of formulating one of their own! Five of these gentlemen were the leading permanent officials of Government departments, and not one of the nine were supposed to be in any way in sympathy with the object of their inquiry. As Mr Lionel Holland, M.P., has well remarked, in his severe strictures on this committee,

“the work of construction must be consigned to men who have not only the ability, but the desire to construct.”

The issue of this report made, in the first instance, the friends of old age pensions exceedingly wroth with its futile conclusion, and also apparently rejoiced certain fickle politicians, who appeared to consider that this report had given the *quietus* to an awkward and embarrassing question. But in reality this report of the last old age committee has done yeoman service to the cause. The ingenuity of its members has certainly made considerable holes in a variety of more or less ill-judged schemes, but they have left Mr Booth's proposal, and those based on it, standing erect, for they elected to consider them as “not coming within the terms of our reference.” Moreover, the indignation of many thoughtful and humane folk, of completely opposite poles in imperial politics, waxed so warm over this feeble and *laissez faire* report, that the country has become more roused in the six months since it was published than in the six years that preceded it. Every Board of Guardians is now debating it, every town has its lecture or discussion on its merits, and every candidate for Parliamentary bye-elections is heckled over its details. True, the Queen's Speech of last week unhappily evaded it, but there are already various bills on the subject from the Government's own supporters. It would then, indeed, have been strange had the Central Poor Law Conference omitted old age pensions from its discussions of 1899.

It surely may be assumed at the outset by all of us that the poverty in old age of the working classes can scarcely be exaggerated. In Sir Spencer Walpole's recent memorandum, as laid before the Old Age Pensions Committee, he says: “There remain objections to Mr Loch's policy of doing nothing, which are very urgent; the stern facts remain that



(a) one person out of every five, sixty-five years and upwards, was in receipt of relief on a particular day in 1892; (b) one person of every three of this age applied for relief in the course of the year; and (c) making reasonable deduction for the well-to-do classes, one working man and woman out of every two are more or less dependent on the rates in their old age." I am quite aware that these figures have been gainsaid, and that many ingenious attempts have been made to belittle them. I must be content to say that I accept them as they stand, and that I think Mr Booth is Mr Loch's superior in the marshalling of figures and in the comparison of statistics. At all events, amidst all the glories of our Empire, there is one question that keeps constantly to my mind forcing itself to the front; it was put in the midst of the Jubilee rejoicings by Mr Birkmyre, ex-M.P. for the Ayr Burghs—"Does not Her Majesty reign over more paupers than any other sovereign or government in Europe?"

We are frequently being reminded that wages are for the most part higher than they were thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago. In certain trades and in certain parts of England that undoubtedly is the case; but it has comparatively little if any bearing on our present question. Nay, I make bold to say, that the present position of the aged workers is worse now than a few years ago, or even than last year. The tendency of the day is against the elderly and the aged, the earning period of life is becoming steadily shorter. The recent Workmen's Compensation Act has certainly intensified this evil. Sometimes, too, it is pointed out that not only have wages risen, but that the purchasing power of money has at the same time materially increased. Contrast tables are drawn up as to the cost of the necessaries of life at the beginning of the Queen's reign, or half-way through it, and as they stand now. But such figures are often

deceptive; other circumstances besides prime cost have to be taken into consideration. For instance, boots and shoes (the staple industry of the county from which I come) are undoubtedly much cheaper than they were; but did not the boots sewn carefully by hand by the country shoemaker last far longer than those turned out so speedily from machines? Does not the same argument as to duration apply, with even greater force, to the Sunday coats of the fathers and grandfathers of our present labourers, as contrasted with the far cheaper but rapidly wearing-out material now used?

Now that it has been established that the average wages of our ordinary agricultural labourers are but 13s.—and of course, therefore, in some counties far lower—how can we possibly expect, with a shadow of reason, such thrift as shall provide for old age? Moreover, the town worker at £1 a week is in no better position.

So far as in me lies, I have ever been a strenuous advocate of thrift wherever and to whatever extent it is possible. During my five years' residence in the Brixworth district (which, notwithstanding the rigour of its "House only" policy for a quarter of a century, was most unhappily situated as regards sound friendly societies), I have done my best to advocate and establish branches of the best of societies—the National Deposit Friendly Society. But with wages at their present level, there are arithmetical limits which make "thrift" an impossible solution of the misery of a poverty-stricken old age. Take, for instance a man in receipt of so much as even £1 a week, and suppose he puts by the remarkable amount of 10s. a month, or an eighth of his income. Suppose, too, that this saving workman has no illness, and that he has regular employment without any intermission between the age of twenty and sixty—at the end of that period the income

from his savings, with compound interest, has been computed at about 3s. 8½d. per week!

A pound a week, too, would be considered a princely sum by an immense number of the toilers of our nation, and by the whole of the working classes of the Union district that I to-day represent. God gave us sentiments and warm hearts as well as intellects and cool heads, and if this question of England's aged poor is ever to be settled with approximate justice, the well-to-do and more fortunate classes must try to put themselves in the workman's position and contrast it with their own. It is quite possible that amongst my brother delegates here this morning, there are some who may have had the advantage of the personal experience of living and sustaining a young family on a wage of a few shillings a week. To them the talk of thrift sufficient for their own sustenance when worn out, or for the entire support of their parents, is as empty as the wind. Such an experience has not been mine, but I knew what it was, in 1873-74, to live for weeks at a time in the homes of some of the steadiest of the Dorset agricultural labourers, living on their food and sleeping beneath their roofs. That experience has been burnt into my soul, never to be effaced. I was filled with amazement at the patience with which they bore their privations, and at the marvellous ingenuity by which man and wife managed to keep clothes on their backs and to put food within their stomachs.

Yes, let us as Guardians of the Poor, assembled in this Guildhall for our twenty-seventh annual conference from all parts of England and Wales, remember that the Local Government Board suggests that we whilst in town should be paid 15s. a day as "reasonable expenses" out of the poor rates we administer. This may be all very right and proper, but let us remember that we are at the present moment using out of the rates 2s. more per day for food and lodging than the average agricultural labourer has to spend



per week for the housing, clothing, and feeding of himself and his family. An occasional thought such as this may be useful in restraining the exuberant and reiterated instigations to an impossible thrift that so often proceed from the lips of some of those who have never known an hour's anxiety as to their own income.

It must also be remembered that those poverty-stricken old people, for whom those of us who believe in a State pension scheme desire to provide, do not to any appreciable extent include the vicious or deliberately bad. This class—the drunkards, the coarsest of sensualists, and the habitually dishonest—have comparatively short lives in any rank of society, and with the poor almost invariably die off before they reach the earliest age at which it is proposed to grant them a pension. The fact that old age has been reached presupposes, as a rule, that that life has not been altogether lived in vain. The Royal Commission on the Aged Poor adopted the view that our working classes were “fairly provident, fairly thrifty, fairly industrious, and fairly temperate.” The special report by Messrs Chamberlain, Ritchie, and three others of the Commissioners, stated “that the imputation that old age pauperism is mainly due to drink, idleness, improvidence, and the like causes, applies to but a very small proportion of the working class population.”

Thrift after all, as has been well remarked, is but a relative term, and the mere saving of money to the neglect of other duties has been far too often held up as almost the sole virtue of a citizen. “To stint the education of children, to continue to overburden a woman with domestic duties, to stand churlishly aside from support of all great humanitarian movements, with the object of saving something for personal old age, would deteriorate the nation far more than even the present pauperism does. The true citizen first performs such duties as will keep his family together

by providing sick and burial allowances, and then, last of all, thinks of himself. This elevation of character exists among the poor to a much larger extent than is commonly believed, and this is one of the grounds upon which they object to a diversion of their income to money pension purposes" (Mr Ralph Price Hardy, Royal Commission on Aged Poor).

Individual saving cannot then be reckoned on to do anything, except in a few isolated cases, to remove England's crying disgrace in the condition of her aged toilers. With regard to divers other means, brought about through mutual combined effort, the same answer, though in a more modified form, has eventually to be made. It has been said that there are four methods of combination for mutual benefit open to our workmen which ought to advantage them in old age:—(1) building societies, (2) co-operation, (3) trade unions, and (4) friendly societies. They are named in the order of their efficacy. As to building societies, it is sufficient to say that they are out of the reach of all save the highest paid artisan. With regard to the highly interesting but often disappointing movement of co-operative production and co-operative trading, it has no direct bearing upon the wants of old age, and can only be regarded as a palliative in a few select cases.

I am a warm admirer of Trade Unions, and wrote and spoke much in their favour (as a then employer of labour) thirty years ago, when to advocate their cause was exceedingly unpopular. But Trade Unions cannot be relied upon to remove the stigma, or to give general help. One of the last returns of these societies gives particulars with regard to the membership, income, and expenditure of 687 unions. Actually 598 of these societies, or 77 per cent., had no superannuation benefit. To put it in another way, these 687 societies had a membership of 1,270,789, of whom 812,111 belonged to societies that

were destitute of any superannuation arrangement. It follows, then, that seven out of every ten trade unionists have no provision whatever for old age. Moreover, the few great societies that have superannuation benefit, such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, are beginning to feel the pinch of their scheme, and to doubt of its policy. Those that are now successfully working their old age allowances, are realising that there are considerable dangers ahead, for the annuitants are bound, by all the laws of life, to considerably increase. On the whole, the tendency of the soundest trades unionists and their advisers is in the direction of a reduction rather than any extension of superannuation benefits.

The Friendly Societies are beyond all doubt a great boon to the country, and of much benefit to their members; but their help with regard to old age allowances has hitherto been infinitesimally small. It is now seventeen years since the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows and the Ancient Order of Foresters formulated schemes of superannuation. The Manchester Unity, with a roll of 751,167 members, has only a few hundred on its pension scheme. The Foresters, with a roll of 726,403, told the Committee of last year that they had "a central pension fund, but it has only three members." The only general friendly society in England that deals thoroughly with the superannuation question is that growing and promising youngster, The National Deposit Friendly Society. It places each member on the old age fund at seventy years of age, sick pay then ceasing; but the old age allowance is only half the daily sick allowance, and each member has to draw a fourth from his own deposit account.

There are not a few, however, who still believe that the Friendly Societies could do far more in the way of superannuation if so disposed. But a study of the last quinquennial returns of the societies made to the Chief Registrar, and of the evidence given before the Royal



Commission on the Aged Poor and the Committee on Old Age Pensions, stamp this notion as *absolutely hopeless*. The actuarial deficiency of the 14,968 societies, according to the last return, rolls up to the startling total of £8,953,256. Of 22,608 branches of friendly societies, 12,448 show a deficiency according to the reckoning of actuaries, and only 5,049 are absolutely solvent. Even if the good societies were actuarially solvent, there is nothing to be hoped for from them for touching the poverty of the great mass of the aged poor. Mr Booth's analysis of Poor Law and census returns, as laid before the Aged Poor Commission, showed that two-fifths of the adult population of England and Wales consists of (*a*) agricultural labourers, (*b*) unskilled town workers, and (*c*) wage-earning women. From these three classes come eighty per cent. of the pauperism of the country. Out of every three of these who live to sixty-five, two come on the poor rates. The large friendly societies have practically no hold on these classes, their rate of contribution is too high for many a striving and honest labourer. The unhappy agricultural labourers take refuge in the usually utterly unsound local or village clubs. A fortnight ago at the Brixworth Board we had two applicants for out-relief, one of whom had paid into a village club for over forty years and the other for over thirty, and both had broke. In my own village I have an aged labourer over fourscore years of age who paid into a local club for fifty-three years, and then it went to pieces. These piteous village tragedies are of common occurrence; they are as hideous and miserable in their results as a Balfour or a Hooley smash, but being on a small scale they don't get into the papers.

One other Friendly Society fact it may be well to remember. The Manchester Unity, which is the most stable of the large societies, had in 1892, 25,419 members over sixty-five; but in 1897 those over sixty-five had increased to 30,234. This shows an increase of

the aged at the rate of 963 per annum, and is out of all proportion to the increase of younger memberships. It will require all the ability and enterprise that this great society possesses to avoid the threatened danger as established by these figures.

We come then to the proposition which alone can solve the difficulty, namely, the intervention of the State, for which I think a considerable majority of the electorate are now fully prepared. If properly worked such a scheme will be an estimable advantage both to Friendly Societies and to Trade Unions. The methods by which State aid can be given are exceedingly various, but they group themselves into three heads—(a) compulsory State insurance, (b) subsidising of friendly societies, and (c) general State pensions.

The first of these has now been ruled out of court by almost all practical thinkers. It had its day in theory, but even the theory is now pretty generally abandoned by all save a handful of its former adherents. To contribute by compulsory instalments would require an army of collectors, nay, even police or soldiers, to enforce the payment from the poorest. To pay a lump sum at an early age has been equally condemned as impossible for the very class we want to reach. Moreover, schemes of this kind could not come into operation for some thirty or forty years, and this in itself destroys all practical value. It is very true, as Gerald Massey sings, that—

“’Tis weary watching wave by wave,  
And yet the tide heaves onward.”

But surely, if we are in earnest, we do not intend to wait with folded hands till this generation has passed away before the boon of some degree of assured comfort in old age has been achieved.

The subvention of Friendly Societies is a far sounder policy, and one that is supported with much earnestness by well-intentioned advocates of State aid. But there are difficulties in the path as well as serious

objections. The chief difficulty is this—if the State made a money grant to a society without any condition or particular inquiry, it would be a premium on financial insecurity and rashness of management. If, on the other hand, the State attaches to its aid any regulations, such interference would be resolutely resisted by the societies. The serious objection is that any scheme for endowing special societies, at the expense of the whole community, is politically indefensible. Moreover, if this objection, as well as the difficulty, could be overcome, the fatal blot would still remain, that a mere endowment of sound societies would not benefit the bulk of the labouring classes, for it is not unwillingness, but inability through poverty, that keeps them out of clubs that are actuarially solvent.

The one remedy, then, left for us to briefly consider, is that of a State pension, pure and simple. It is often forgotten how lavish the State now is with its pensions in certain directions. The Army vote of last year for “non-effective service” was nearly four millions, and that of the Navy of over two millions, whilst Civil Service pensions and those from the Consolidated Fund amounted to at least another million, yielding a total of seven millions sterling, and that irrespective of a considerable number of police and other pensions paid partly through local rates. In the main, no doubt, this is as it should be, but the tillers of the soil, without whom no State could exist for a year, as well as the general body of the wealth producers of the country, are in reality State servants, as well as generals, admirals, and judges, or those under their command. England, as John Morley remarked the other day, has her heroes in the factory, the mine, and the field, as well as in the barrack-yard or on the man-of-war. Her greatness is far more due to the triumphs of peace than to her success in war. If she is careful to pension her fighters, why should



she not pension her workers? Those who tell us that England is to be "unmanned," forsooth, by any general pension scheme, ought to explain how it comes to pass that her soldiers, sailors, and police are not rendered effeminate and slack in their duty through the expectancy of pensions! Those, too, who seem to think that the poor labourer will lose all filial respect for his father or love for his mother, provided the State helps in their maintenance when worn out, ought to explain how it is that the children of pensioned officials, from Cabinet ministers down to the room sweepers of Downing Street, are not (so far as we know) habitually given to breaches of the fifth commandment!

The inability to note that a large amount of the arguments gravely used against the subsidising of the aged poor tell equally against all classes of pensions enumerated above, is one of the strangest features of the war of words that rages round this question. The Committee on Old Age Pensions, which has recently done its level best to choke off all possible help from reaching the poverty-stricken aged through the State, dilates on the difficulty that arises "when the power of the aged to contribute to their means of support by light labour is considered. A man or woman subsidised by the grant of a State pension is in a position to underbid a competitor who has no resource but his or her actual earnings." The Commissioners do not appear to have recollected that that is exactly what is going on now under a limited pension system, which must by necessity produce more evils of that kind than a more general one. Most of us know of cases in which applicants for Poor Law posts, in the appointment of Guardians, are to be found amongst pensioned soldiers or policemen. Half-pay officers, too, frequently obtain other salaried posts, such as Chief Constableships or Inspectorships of Weights and Measures, &c., or even other Government appointments such as Inspectorships of the Local Government Board. We cannot help

wondering whether the majority of the gentlemen who formed this Committee—when they waxed morbidly unhappy over the probable harm, demoralisation, and check of industry that would accrue, if the toilers only expected a very modest pension at the end of their days — paused to reflect on their own position. Amongst them were Sir Francis Mowatt, Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, salary £2,000 ; Sir Spencer Walpole, Secretary to the Post Office, £1,750 ; Sir Courtenay Boyle, Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade, £1,800 ; my friend Mr Brabrook, Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, £1,500 ; and Mr A. J. Finlaison, Actuary of the National Debt Office, £1,000. Is it not correct to assume that, notwithstanding their handsome salaries, these gentlemen will receive considerable pensions on their superannuation or retirement? Would they not justly resent any comments that might be made on them—and after all they are only ours and the nation's servants — to the effect that the expectation of pensions was making them thriftless, lazy, and indifferent in their lives! Well, then, let these gentlemen plainly understand that the working classes have too their feelings and their share of honourable self-respect, and that it is doing the labourer a wrong and an injustice to insinuate that he is, forsooth, to become a wasteful scamp, if the State promises him the little pittance of 5s. a week should he live to be sixty-five! To my mind the argument is as wanton and as baseless with the labourers, as it would be if used toward these high-placed permanent officials.

Mr Broadhurst, M.P., in his special report on the Aged Poor (and there could be few more competent judges), puts on record his opinion that, far from anticipating any demoralisation of character from a general pension scheme, he believed it would indirectly bring about an improvement in the standard of life and personal character of the poorest class. Further, he

stated his agreement with Mr Charles Booth, Mr J. Chamberlain, Mr Ralph Price Hardy, the Rev. J. F. Wilkinson, and other eminent authorities, that an old age pension scheme would positively encourage and promote individual savings, by removing present hopelessness, and by making it, for the first time, worth a man's while to provide even sixpence a week in his old age, with which to supplement his State pension. It is my own most profound conviction (after taking the closest possible interest in the well-being of the agricultural labourer for thirty-five years, and intimately connected with colliers for fifteen years), that a scheme such as Mr Booth's, or some fair modification of it, would at once prove a very great incentive to thrift.

There is much of sound sentiment in Mr Booth's original scheme of 5s. a week for every one who likes to take it over sixty-five years of age. It is no more illogical than free education for all; but the expense would be so very great that the country would require much more instruction before it would embark on so large a scheme. Probably the best way to make a satisfactory and speedy beginning would be to rule out from the pension fund every one whose income from earnings or savings, or both, was more than 10s. a week, or 15s. in the case of a married couple. This is half of what is being done in New Zealand. Certain restrictions would of course have to be made with regard to criminals and confirmed drunkards, and a few very broad principles laid down under which application must be made from time to time in certain cases, as is at present the rule with out-relief. But otherwise when age and income were once established, the pensioner might receive by post a weekly pay note which could be cashed at any post-office.

Mr Lionel Holland, M.P., and his energetic friends are all in favour of the County Council undertaking the administrative work of a national pension. As a working County Councillor, and thoroughly alive to the



multiplicity of work that is now committed to us, I strongly object to such a big scheme being thrust upon us. The only way in which it could then be worked would be through an army of paid officials. Surely, if only on the grounds of economy and greater local knowledge, the work had far better be left in the hands of the Guardians or District Councillors, with some possible power to add Friendly Society or Trades Union representatives to their number. This would be much better than a Pension Board elected *ad hoc*. The Guardians have the machinery for inquiring ready to hand, together with a representative or representatives from every parish, township, or ward. The taint of the term pauper would soon disappear from all save the worthless. A curious essay might be written on the strange and artificial way in which the Latin term *pauper* has become a disgrace, whilst its English equivalent of *poor* conveys no stigma. To be poor is no sin in God's eyes, nor is it an offence against the State's true economy; but to be rich is often hateful to the One, and harmful to the other. In this scheme the pensioner might be poor, but would lose no vestige of civil right or franchise; the term pauper might possibly still be retained for the very exceptional cases under restraint in the house or under conditional relief outside.

Such a plan as this would make a material saving in the rates, for much of Poor Law expense would then cease. The cost of distribution and inquiring would still be defrayed by the locality, but (so long as we have indirect taxation) the national purse should be exclusively drawn upon for the pensions. The expense for such a scheme would approximate, it is thought, some ten millions. I have taken the greatest pains to work out the probable cost, and I firmly believe this will be rather over than under the mark. There should be no ear-marked source from which these pensions should come; they should

simply be drawn from the common purse. Nevertheless the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whose happy lot the providing for so glorious a scheme should fall (an infinitely more glorious one than the furnishing of another gigantic engine of war), would do well at that time to try and raise extra funds by giving another turn to Sir William Harcourt's wrench on the death duties, or by some graduated income tax that should specially fall on the exceedingly wealthy.

The State is humiliated when she suffers any of her aged toilers to die in anxious penury; but she is positively injured when vast estates or hoarded millions accumulate under the control of a single citizen. It is not necessary to be a leveller or an anarchist to hold such views as these—they are the opinions of Mr John Stuart Mill and Professor Goulborne Smith; and I hold with Mr Carnegie, the millionaire, that “to die possessed of millions of available wealth is to die disgraced,” and “to leave huge fortunes to our children is to impose upon them burdens and disadvantages.” Here we are gathered together as the Guardians of God's poor in the very heart of England's mighty capital, and as I think of the luxury of the West on the one hand, and the poverty of the East on the other, I take up Browning's prayer and cry—

“O God! make no more giants, elevate the race!”

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*N.B.*—I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr George Turner and to Mr Shallard, of the Fabian Society, for many of the Friendly Societies and Trades Union statistics quoted above, some of which have been published before, whilst others are entirely new. But before using them, I have in each case verified them by the original returns.

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### BRIEF SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS.

That the poverty in old age of a large proportion of the working classes is extreme, and a crying scandal to the nation.

That the tendency of the day is against the elderly, the wage-earning period being now shorter.

That provision for old age cannot be made by the great bulk of the working classes with wages at their present level.

That provision for old age, as apart from sickness, is not made to any appreciable extent by either Friendly Societies or Trades Unions.

That the financial position of both Friendly Societies and Trades Unions renders it hopeless to expect further material help from such sources, and that disaster must overtake them if they attempt it.

That both the Societies and the Unions will do their legitimate work far better if the State gives material assistance with regard to the aged.

That the difficulty can only be solved by the intervention of the State.

That compulsory insurance, either by instalments or in a lump sum, is unattainable.

That the mere subvention of Friendly Societies would not remove the difficulty.

That a general State pension for the aged would remove hopelessness and promote thrift in the workers.

That the present vast number of national pensioners of the Army, Navy, and Civil Service are not demoralised by the system, and that it is folly to imagine that demoralisation would result if the nation's toilers were modestly pensioned.

That a good outline scheme would be—pensions of 5s. a week for all over sixty-five, whose income did not exceed 10s. per week.

That the cost of administration should be borne locally, but that the pensions should be paid from the national purse.

That the Guardians should be the inquiring and administering agency, but that when a pension has once been granted it should be paid through the Post Office, and convey no civic disability.

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Mr A. F. VULLIAMY (Clerk to the Ipswich Board of Guardians) read the following paper on the same subject :—

## OLD AGE PENSIONS AND THE POOR LAW.

BY MR A. F. VULLIAMY,

*Clerk to the Ipswich Board of Guardians.*

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THERE are two different kinds of schemes of old age pensions before the public, the universal and the limited; the former giving pensions of 5s. a week to all persons attaining the age of sixty-five years, irrespective of character and position; the latter limiting the pension to persons who, by their previous conduct and character, have deserved exceptional treatment.

The scheme of universal old age pensions is the simplest and most specious, and has therefore, obtained the most general approval. Its advocates contend that it would not degrade the recipient, for all would receive it, peer and peasant, millionaire and pauper. Its cost would not be excessive, for a great part of the present Poor Law expenditure, that which relates to the maintenance of the aged, would then disappear. Under present conditions of life, men can afford to provide for sickness and death, but cannot afford the necessary expenditure to provide for old age; and whatever the cost may be, it is justifiable, for it is a payment by the nation for the nation's good, by the young and strong for the old and worn-out. Its opponents, on the other hand, contend that the cost would be excessive, the burden unjust, the effect demoralising; and that most men can provide against old age. I propose to consider each of these last propositions, and ascertain how far it is justified.

It is difficult for the ordinary mind to grasp the meaning of millions, and if the cost of an universal old age pension of 5s. a week is to be realised, it is better to take for consideration some smaller area

than the whole country. With the view, therefore, of getting some clear idea as to its cost, I took the Union (Ipswich) in which I live, and with the facts concerning which I am conversant. In Ipswich, both indoor and outdoor relief are given, the latter according to the Local Government Board Orders, and certain definite rules adopted by the Guardians. The Union is purely urban; it is mainly a manufacturing town, and it is fairly prosperous; its population is rather more than 60,000. Its outdoor aged poor are about 220 in number, receiving about £32 a week; its indoor poor are about 165 in number, costing about 3s. 6d. a week each. The weekly cost, therefore, of relief to those over sixty-five years of age is therefore: For outdoor poor, about £32; for indoor, about £30; altogether, about £62. In order to ascertain the weekly cost of an old age pension of 5s. a week, I ascertained the number of deaths of persons over sixty-five years of age in one year, and found they were 300. I also found that the average age of these persons was seventy-five years. It was clear, therefore, that the number of persons over the age of sixty-five was ten times 300, viz., 3,000. The actual weekly amount, therefore, paid in pensions would be £750, or, after deducting the amount of the present weekly payments to the aged in receipt of outdoor and indoor relief, about £690 a week; about £35,800 a year. This would be an addition to the burdens of the town, in rates or taxes, of nearly three times the amount of the Guardians' present contribution orders; to the rates, if the money were levied by that means, of about 3s. in the £. This increase, however, great as it would be, represents but a portion of the additional cost, for the payment of 3,000 pensions, and the bookkeeping connected with it, with the necessary proof of age at commencement, and evidence of identity throughout, would involve the employment of a large number of officials, whether the pensions were paid weekly or

monthly, while the rates would not be altogether relieved of their present expenditure for the aged, for many would spend their pensions, whether quarterly or weekly, in two days at the outside, and would then apply for relief on account of destitution; and many who were ill, or in a state of senile decay, would find their pension insufficient, and would have to enter the Workhouse. The cost, therefore, of universal old age pensions would be very great. In view of that fact it is important to consider whether it can with truth be averred that the consequent taxation would fall equally on all, for, though that point may be disregarded when the payment is but small, when it is large, and the burden great, it becomes a question of primary importance. Whatever the mode of taxation adopted for raising the money (and it is difficult to suggest any mode which would not be unfair to considerable classes of the community) one thing is clear, viz., that it would press most hardly upon those least likely to profit by the expenditure. If the taxation for it were national, those engaged in unhealthy callings, and who, humanly speaking, could never hope to attain the age of sixty-five years, would be taxed for the benefit of those more fortunately situated. The earthenware manufacturers, for instance, 51 per cent. of whom die between the ages of forty-five and sixty-five, would be taxed to pay pensions for agricultural labourers, of whom only 18 per cent. die between those ages. If, to meet this difficulty, the money required were raised and applied locally, still the infirm and sickly in each locality would be taxed for the benefit of the hale and hearty; the weak for the benefit of the strong. This injustice no legislation could obviate.

This, however, is not the only injustice which universal old age pensions would create. Men over sixty-five years of age would enter into unfair competition with men under that age. The reason why



women's labour is underpaid is because a large number of women work who are not entirely dependent upon their earnings for their living. A similar cause with men would produce a similar effect. If there were a large number of men working who, owing to their being in receipt of 5s. a week pension, were not entirely dependent upon their earnings for their living, they would force down the rate of wages for their less fortunate comrades fifty-five or sixty years old. Working men would be taxed to enable some of their number to undersell the others. No scheme would prevent this, except a law that no man should work after he attained the age of sixty-five years; a drastic measure which not even the most ardent advocate of old age pensions suggests. Without some such provision, however, the persons who would chiefly benefit by old age pensions would be the great employers of labour, who would be enabled thereby to get their work more cheaply done at the cost of the community at large.

It is said: "The State pays pensions to the veterans of its Civil Service and its army and navy. Why should it not give them to the veterans of peaceful toil?" There is nothing more deceptive than a false analogy. The State desires to have for its service the best of a man's years, and the best only. It does not wish to have a veteran soldier unable to do a long day's march, or a civil servant effete through age encrusted with tradition. It therefore makes one of the conditions of its service that it shall have the power to discharge a man at a certain age, giving him a pension. It secures thereby efficiency at a proportionately low rate of pay, and continuity of service. The State pays the cost, the State reaps the benefit. But if the State, that is the whole community, pays the cost, and one section of it reaps the benefit, whatever it may be, the analogy altogether ceases. It is no longer deferred pay given by the State for services

rendered to it ; it becomes a gigantic subsidy in part to employers, in part to men employed by them.

The great trade societies of this country, whose main object is to secure by combination an adequate return for services performed, have fully recognised that if this object is to be attained, it is absolutely necessary that only the thoroughly efficient should be employed ; that men who, in consequence of advanced age, are unable to do a good day's work, should be induced to cease from labour. They therefore early saw the necessity of providing old age pensions for those who belonged to their various societies, the period at which these pensions are paid varying with the severity and healthiness of the work engaged in. There are thousands of men at the present time receiving pensions from these various trade societies, under different restrictions as to their occupations, the object of all these restrictions being that they shall not enter into competition with the men who are engaged in the trade and are paying them their annuities. All this is right ; the trades union reaps the benefit, the trades union pays the cost. The trades unionist in work out of the higher wages he gets pays the aged member of his union a pension to prevent his underselling him.

I trust I have shown that the taxation necessary for old age pensions would be not only very onerous, but necessarily unjust,—first, because it would affect the weak and sickly, and those engaged in unhealthy trades, whilst the advantages arising from it would be reaped only by the strong and healthy ; secondly, because it would reduce wages, and so injure the man without a pension ; and thirdly, because it would, to a great extent, be a subsidy to employers of labour at the cost of the whole community.

There remains to be considered the moral effect of universal old age pensions. One thing is certain, and that is, that they could not increase thrift, for they

would not be its consequence. All that those who advocate them can contend is that they would not diminish it. If a man can, by steady industry and reasonable self-denial, provide for old age, the very effort will strengthen him, both morally and physically; and he will be a better man when in old age enjoying the fruits of his industry, than he would be if he were living upon a pension not directly the result of any effort on his part. All the good habits acquired through the endeavour to provide for his old age would remain with him after the object for which they had been called into existence had been attained, whilst the recollection of his own struggles would make him sympathise with and help in the struggles of others. If he were sure of a pension of 5s. a week, the consciousness of this might prevent him in early manhood from making any endeavour to provide for his old age; the knowledge that he was dependent upon his own efforts for such provision would make him in many instances begin to save in early age, and his savings would generally not be limited to the amount necessary for an old age pension of 5s. a week. There are cases, I admit, in which the performance of higher duties, the maintenance of his parents, the bringing up of his children, the support of his religion, have prevented a man from saving for his old age. Such men are the natural recipients of such kindnesses as are prompted by the recollection in the hearts of their children of the care and attention received by them from their parents in their youth; they are the proper objects of those benefits which are the result of a charity founded upon mutual respect, and which therefore ennobles the giver and degrades not the receiver. Filial affection and true charity will provide for these men. To narrow the field for the exercise of this affection and this charity would diminish, not strengthen, the moral stamina of the nation.



I freely admit, however, that if provision for old age can, in a considerable majority of cases, only be obtained by denial to oneself and one's family of the necessaries of life ; if old age can only be provided for by a course of life which curtails it ; and if this is a necessary result of unavoidable conditions of industrial life, and not of an inequitable division of the fruits of toil between labour and capital, the worn-out worker should have some haven of rest provided for him in his old age. I maintain, however, that this is not the case ; that, on the contrary, the great majority of working men can provide for old age. I will go a step further and say, that the majority of them do so.

Before considering this question, however, it is necessary that there should be an agreement as to the meaning of the word "necessaries." By necessaries I mean things without which mankind must dwindle and ultimately decay. Beer and tobacco are not necessaries, but luxuries, unless used medicinally. I grudge no man either the one or the other, but I do not consider that any man ought to say that he cannot afford to provide for his own old age while he spends the money which would enable him to do so in tobacco and beer : I deny altogether the right of my neighbour to call upon me, who do not smoke and do not habitually drink intoxicating drinks, to help to pay his old age pension, whilst a little self-denial in these luxuries would enable him to do so for himself.

To a young man of twenty-five years of age, who belongs to no club, but desires to ensure for himself an annuity of 5s. a week for life after he attains the age of sixty-five years in the Post Office Savings Bank, the weekly cost is 5d. If he is an Oddfellow or Forester, and obtains the annuity through his club, the cost is less, not more than about 4d. a week. The man must be extraordinarily clever who can estimate the receipts and expenditure of the average working-man so exactly that he knows within fivepence

how much a week he has to spare after paying for his absolute necessities. Yet those who confidently assert that the ordinary working man cannot make the payments necessary for an old age pension never bring forward any facts in any way justifying this assertion. Under these circumstances it is scarcely necessary for me to give reasons for my belief that the working man can afford to provide for his old age. I will, however, mention shortly a few of them.

First, *The enormous expenditure by them in their luxuries.* I will mention only three of them: (a) Intoxicating drinks, (b) tobacco, (c) amusements. The amount annually spent on the first is nearly half as much again as the total amount raised by imperial taxation; that expended on the second is large, and constantly increasing; the expenditure on the third it is more difficult to ascertain, but if we may judge by the large numbers that find time and money to see football matches, it must be very considerable. It seems absurd to say that men who can afford to spend so much on those three items are unable to provide fourpence or even fivepence a week each for provision for old age.

Secondly, *The improvement in the condition of hand-workers in recent years.* While their wages have increased, their expenditure, in every item except rent, has diminished. If there was one man who found it difficult to lay by anything, it was the man with several small children. For their schooling he had, but has no longer to pay. If he will spend the money this used to cost him in providing for his old age he will be able to ensure himself a pension of 5s. a week from the time he attains the age of sixty-five years.

Thirdly, *The opinion of working men themselves as shown by their acts.* Twenty-seven trades unions in England and Scotland, numbering 373,662 members, paid in 1895, £128,591 to 7,254 superannuated members. These represented all kinds of occupations. They were

established when earnings were not so large, and expenses were greater than they are now, and yet those who founded them considered that those who would belong to their various trade unions would be able not only to enable their leaders to maintain their rights, but also to provide against sickness, to be supported when travelling in search of work, and to cease from arduous work, receiving a superannuation varying from 2s. 9d. to 12s. a week for the rest of their lives, after attaining an age varying from fifty-five to sixty years. If these working men could so provide, much more can they do so now.

I go, however, further, and I say that the majority of working men do, even now, provide for old age. This proposition many, who agree that hand-workers can pay for their own superannuation pensions, will deny; for it is a current article of belief that the working men and women of England, whatever their virtues may be, are not thrifty. It is not mine. I believe they have become thrifty without ceasing to be generous. My reasons for my opinion are:—

First, *The extraordinary success of all working men's investments.* If, in any country, and in any age, a historian desires to ascertain whether the people are thrifty or not, he inquires whether they avail themselves readily of the opportunities afforded them for the investment of money. Now nothing is more remarkable than the rapid growth and marvellous success of that institution which is pre-eminently the working man's bank, viz., the Post Office Savings Bank. We see its depositors, and the aggregate amount of its deposits, increase in greater proportion than the population. And this increase is not only in the bulk of its business, not only in the temporary investments made in it, but in the balance remaining in the hands of Government after payment of all withdrawals, a balance exceeding a hundred millions, a balance so large as to constitute, in its investment, a constantly-increasing



financial difficulty. What is the bulk of this money but provision for old age made, not by thousands, but by millions of the working men and women in England? Look again at that gigantic trading concern, the Industrial Co-operative Society, with its offshoots throughout the land, and upwards of twenty millions of invested capital. What are these millions but the savings of the working classes, invested by themselves for their own benefit? Again, wherever working men have the opportunity of investing money in the purchase of land and houses, they readily avail themselves of it. In the town in which I live, in which such opportunities have existed for many years, a very large proportion of the owners of land and houses are men and women of the working classes, and the property owned by them, the investment of their savings, is of very considerable value in the aggregate. All the above investments are mainly in the nature of a provision for old age, the expenses arising from illness and death are met by membership of a friendly society. Of these and their success I need not speak, they are known and admitted. In one order only, the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, in Ipswich alone, the invested capital amounts to £56,000, this being the amount of accumulations of the savings of its members beyond what they have expended in sick-pay and burials. Nor does the fact that contribution to superannuation is made compulsory seem in any way to affect the membership of these societies, for the numbers of men who have joined the largest of the lodges of Oddfellows in Ipswich, the Orwell Lodge, since it made provision for old age compulsory, now some five years since, have been more numerous than in the same number of preceding years.

Secondly, *The comparatively small number of men over the age of sixty-five years* who are paupers. It is very commonly asserted that half those who attain the age of sixty-five years die paupers. I doubt the truth

of this, and I know of no statistics which justify the assertion. Even if it were true, there would still be a large number of men who must have made provision for old age. I prefer, however, again to take statistics which I know to be correct, relating to an area with which I am well acquainted. As I have already stated, out of 3,000 people in Ipswich over the age of sixty-five years, only 400, including those who are poor because they have been drunken, dissolute, idle, or extravagant, are paupers. There are 2,600, or, deducting those who inherited means of sustenance, say 2,000, who either still work for their living, are maintained by their children, or have saved up money enough to keep them without work—a very large proportion of them coming within the last category.

The investigation which has just been made seems to justify the assertion that universal old age pensions would be enormously expensive and demoralising in their effects, and the location for them necessarily unjust in its incidence and its results; and also that nearly all men could, and a large number do, provide for old age.

I have not dealt with schemes in which the maintenance of the aged is limited to certain classes or hedged in with certain conditions. These have been fully inquired into by a Government Commission, composed of men, the most expert in England for the purpose, who were commissioned to report whether they could recommend the adoption of any proposals for encouraging the industrial population, by State aid or otherwise, to make provision for old age, with special regard to their cost and probable financial results to the Exchequer and to local rates; their effect in promoting habits of thrift and self-reliance; their influence on the prosperity of the friendly societies; and the possibility of securing the co-operation of these institutions in their practical working. Very slowly, and with very great reluctance, the Com-

missioners were forced to the conclusion in the course of their inquiry that none of the schemes submitted to them would attain the objects the Government had in view, and that they themselves were unable, after repeated attempts, to devise any proposal free from grave inherent disadvantages.

Another conclusion the Commission came to I should like to mention, because it bears upon a previous portion of this paper. The course of their inquiry strongly impressed upon them the fact that a large and constantly increasing number of the industrial population of this country do already, by prudence, self-reliance, and self-denial, make their old age independent and self-respected.

This number would have greatly increased by now if it had not been for the demoralising prospect of a State pension. It would rapidly grow larger if this prospect were removed, for the leaders of working men are in earnest in their desire to induce them, under their present improved conditions of life, to provide for their old age by their own efforts, under their own management, free from the control and interference of the State.

The provision for old age may be safely left to the thrift of the people, to their combined efforts in that direction, through the Post Office Savings Bank, the great friendly societies, the trades unions, and many other channels. The few remaining will consist of the unthrifty through drink or otherwise, and of a very small number who, through sheer misfortune, or in consequence of the cost attendant upon the performance of duties higher even than thrift, have been unable to provide for their old age. The former the Poor Law, as at present administered, can best deal with ; for the latter private and endowed charity could perfectly well provide ; so far as it fails to do so, we must look to improved Poor Law classification as the best remedy for any hardness in their present condition.



## DISCUSSION.

Rev. W. J. FOXELL (Blean, East Kent) said that there could be no doubt in the minds of those who had had the advantage of listening to the two papers that this was a subject which evoked a great deal of interest—the human interest which they took in poverty and old age and suffering, and the political interest attaching to so vast a problem. There was a marked division of opinion on the subject, and that would have its advantages in making the debate on the subject pretty lively. The great question for the Conference to consider was, how far had voluntary agencies been a failure? Mr Vulliamy's statistics showed that voluntary agencies had not been a failure. They were told that the friendly societies were making continual strides in the direction of providing for old age, and that the workmen were availing themselves of the opportunities afforded by the friendly societies; and they could for the price of a quart of beer weekly at the age of twenty-five purchase an annuity of five shillings a week, payable at the age of sixty-five years. The Government already made that provision, and how could they say that voluntary agency was a failure? They were told that the agricultural labourer could not make provision for old age. They had a pathetic picture drawn for them of the working man who was performing the duties of a husband and father and spending all his wages, so that there was nothing left wherewith to provide for old age. It was said he could not possibly make provision. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that was so, and that the State made provision for him instead, how would that operate? It would be taxation in aid of wages. (Dissent.) They could not escape from it, it would be the inevitable result. The employer would say, "Look what the State does for you," and there would be a retrogression to the state of affairs which existed prior to the passing of the Poor Law of 1834. (Mr Foxell protested against interruptions from the members in the body of the hall, pointing out that he could not possibly express the opinion of all present.) The question was whether the workman could or could not make provision for old age. Evidence was forthcoming that the workman would not do so, preferring to spend his money in amusements and beer and tobacco, although he might at the cost of fourpence or fivepence a week lay by enough to provide him with a pension in his old age. (The time allotted to the speaker having expired, his speech ended at this point.)

Mr G. J. ROBINSON (Amersham) said it was inexpressibly sad to hear old labourers say, "May the Lord remove me rather than I should have to go into the Workhouse." It was a sad blot on the social system that these old people who had had no opportunity of providing for their old age should have to go into the Workhouse. (Hear, hear.) No reform had ever been carried without opposition and difficulty, and so it would be in the case of old age pensions.

The Commissioners were heavily handicapped by the terms of reference. The nation must have old age pensions, and in approaching the subject they must ignore political economy. (Cheers and laughter.) They must approach the subject from the flesh and blood standpoint. That was why he liked Dr Cox's address. The Rev. Doctor felt what he said, and advocated the cause of the poor with a sincerity which did his heart good to hear. He could not, however, entirely agree with all that Dr Cox said. He was rather between the two papers. (A Voice—"Between two stools." Laughter.) Their first aim must be to elevate and not to depress the poor, and they could not help a man who would not help himself. He could not see how any old age pension would benefit the existing generation of labourers. Let the young men of twenty to twenty-five years of age begin saving, and let there be a State grant to encourage them in their thrift. That would mean an interval of something like forty years before the pensions would commence, and in the meanwhile let the Guardians grant out-relief, not as out-relief, but as a pension, and let them exercise more care in classifying the deserving cases, and there should be a clause passed by Parliament authorising the deserving aged poor to earn a little to eke out whatever was given them from the rates. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr WILLIAM CROOKS, L.C.C. (Poplar), who was warmly greeted on rising, said that the paper read by Mr Vulliamy was an exceptionally clever exposition of the ways and means of the Charity Organisation Society. If Mr Vulliamy had only read Mr Chamberlain's remarks he would have seen how much better he would have done to leave the matter entirely alone. If they made it a capital offence, and hanged every one who was exceedingly poor, there would be an end of the problem at once. (Cheers and laughter.) The wonderful thing about such papers as Mr Vulliamy's was that they always emanated from somebody who was exceptionally well placed, and looked upon those less fortunately circumstanced as the scum of the earth. (Uproar.) [In response to indignant cries of "Order," the Earl BEAUCHAMP said—"Mr Crooks has said nothing yet which I shall stop him from saying." (Cheers.)] Mr Vulliamy expressed the opinion that every one was capable of providing for himself; if Mr Vulliamy believed that, then he had no right to retain his position as Clerk to the Ipswich Board of Guardians—(cheers and dissent)—but should call upon the Board to shut up the Workhouse. (Hear, hear.) Statistics showed that two out of every seven persons over the age of sixty-five years were in receipt of poor relief. Mr Vulliamy's paper was full of contradictions. He said the Ipswich Court of the Ancient Order of Foresters had increased its numbers, and yet that the reason they had not progressed was because of the prospect of old age pensions—(laughter)—and he went on to say "Are the people who die young to be called upon to provide for those who attain the age of sixty-five?" and at the same time he argued that every young man should pay his fivepence a week. (Laughter.) What



would become of the fivepences of the persons who died young? They would go to the Government. Mr Vulliamy could not ride two horses. Then as to the drink. He was a teetotaler himself, but he recognised that they got a revenue from that, and that if they did not get it from drink, it would have to come from somewhere else, the teetotalers perhaps. (Laughter.) To say a man must not drink or smoke or go to football matches was rather a strong order for the liberty-loving English people. (Cheers.) They were not to do anything for the aged poor because it would undermine the liberty and manliness of Great Britain! Let them think of the men in the army, navy, and civil service who got pensions, and they would see that it was only a question of degree. Look at the rich paupers not ashamed to receive pensions, men who had earned from £1,200 to £2,000 a year and more, who were not ashamed of being pensioners. (Cheers.) Had Mr Vulliamy paid his fivepence a week? Not likely. He relied entirely on the good feeling of the people of Ipswich to make him comfortable in his old age. (Cheers and laughter, and cries of "Order.") The Government had helped the necessitous schools, they had helped the necessitous squires, and why could not they now help the necessitous poor? (Prolonged cheering.)

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Sec., Central and South-Eastern Poor Law Conferences) said they had to thank Dr Cox for a very able paper, whether or no they agreed with his arguments and conclusions. He thought, however, that Dr Cox took a very gloomy view of the capacity of the poorer classes to provide for their own old age. A very similar view was prevalent at the time of the last general reform of the Poor Law. In 1832 it was almost universally thought that the poor could not possibly provide against the ordinary accidents of life. History had entirely falsified this view. Now that nobody denied the generally improved condition of the working man, it seemed strange that this ancient pessimistic view of the inability of the poor to provide for themselves should be revived. It was ridiculous to suppose that the working man who insured at all could not pay the extra amount, in addition to his ordinary weekly payment to his club, of 2½d. at the ages of eighteen to twenty to 4d. at the age of twenty-five, which would secure him an old age pension. Therefore all schemes in aid of friendly society members would be merely helping those who could or did help themselves now, and with the exception of the scheme of Mr Charles Booth, leave out almost all those who now come upon the rates for support. It was well known what an infinitesimal number of members of friendly societies came upon the rates at any time of their lives. The effect of such schemes could only be to largely recruit the army of State-aided persons—now called paupers—from the ranks of the independent working classes. With these few general remarks he would now proceed to criticise some of Dr Cox's statements. First, then, having determined in his own mind that old age pensions are desirable and necessary, Dr Cox fell foul of a Committee which came to a different conclusion, and



would have another composed of people already committed to that view. Did not such a condition imply the fitting of facts to suit theories instead of the drawing of conclusions from facts? Then Dr Cox referred to the fact that contributions for superannuation pay were not popular among members of friendly societies. He (Mr Chance) would supplement what Mr Vulliamy said on this point in his equally able paper by referring to the Foresters. This Order would not allow any new Court to be established which did not provide for superannuation pay in lieu of sick pay after sixty-five, and it was a curious thing that these Courts are more popular than the old ones, as is shown by the number of new members.\* Then Dr Cox devoted an elaborate argument to prove that every citizen was as much entitled to a pension as those who are commonly called "Servants of the State"—that is, those employed *directly* by the Government. If this general principle was admitted, it at once became ridiculously unjust to arbitrarily rule out from any scheme of old age pensions every one whose income was above a certain sum. Indeed, it was clear that Dr Cox saw the flaw, for he only rejected Mr Charles Booth's scheme on the score of expense. At the close of his paper he suggests the necessary moneys for old age pensions being raised by another turn of Sir W. Harcourt's screw or by a graduated income-tax. Possibly every one at that Conference was not aware how much of the increased expenditure of the nation during the last twenty years had been met from those sources. In an article in the *Times* of this year (16th February) on "Twenty Years' Finance," the writer says: "Notwithstanding the ordinary growth of the revenue, which has been considerable, and the extraordinary growth of Post Office revenue, which has covered and more than covered the extraordinary growth of outlay in that direction, it has been needful to find about £20,000,000 of new resources, and these resources have been found exclusively in the death duties and the income-tax. What used to be the great pillars of the revenue, the Customs and the Excise, which still bring in nearly £60,000,000 of money, have not contributed in any way to the help of the Government with new resources all these years when such heavy calls have been made upon it." It was, however, evident that Dr Cox and those who thought with him considered that the additional burden falling on the propertied classes—who, by the way, were not all millionaires—was one of the incidental advantages of old age pensions. It only remained for him to say that the want of *finality* which attached to all old age pension schemes was one of the main objections to them to his own mind. It was as perfectly certain as could be that five shillings would not be found sufficient, and that sixty-five will be found too old. He feared, too, that the extra

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\* As Dr Cox mentions in his reply (*infra*, p. 663), this statement is not true of the whole Order. But the rule applies in the Sheffield district of the Order (*see* Evidence given to the Committee on Old Age Pensions by Mr T. Abbott, Questions 1436-1442), and therefore the argument is not affected.

burden of taxation which the nation or a section of it would have to bear would rather aggravate than relieve the poverty which old age pensions were supposed to be going to cure. (Cheers.)

Mr T. W. RUSSELL, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board), who was cheered on rising, said—This is one of the most burning questions known to politicians. I am one of those politicians who until the present moment have never said one word in public upon the question. I have not committed myself to anything. I have not made any pledges to my constituents, but I have read every word of the evidence given before committees and commissions and all the reports, and I have come to a clear opinion in my own mind on the whole question, but I am not at liberty to state what that opinion is here to-day. (Laughter.) Will you allow me to play the judicial part in the matter, and moderate between my friend Mr Vulliamy and my friend Mr Crooks, and by the way Mr Crooks ought to know that Mr Vulliamy is paying very much more than fivepence a week towards his pension. (Cheers and laughter.) [Mr CROOKS: "He is getting a great deal more than a pound a week to pay it with."] Putting aside all personal questions, it is an undoubted fact that a very large number of deserving poor are unable to provide for their old age. It is a fact, and a very distressing fact, and the statesman and the politician must face it. It is all very well to talk about getting rid of political economy, about as difficult a task as even Mr Crooks ever undertook. (Laughter.) Amongst the people of this country, rightly or wrongly, there is a deep-seated prejudice against the Workhouse and against accepting out-relief. (Cheers.) Whatever side a man is on he must admit that, and most men who have thought deeply on this question are agreed that it would be well if some plan could be devised which would relieve the pressing need and save the self-respect of the deserving poor. These three things will be admitted on both sides of this Conference. Whatever may be said about the moral soundness of old age pensions, and Mr Vulliamy had a good deal to say about it, and there would be a good deal said about it in the future, or the actuarial soundness of any scheme, I think it would be well for this country if some plan can be devised, and I maintain that the object of those who are pressing it is a good object. (Cheers.) Now that is not committing myself to old age pensions. (Cheers and laughter.) Now I have just two points to put before my friends who are pressing this question. I do not in the least complain of the pressure. I would like them to consider this one point—whatever plan may be devised, it may be moderate at the start, it is certain to grow. It will grow with what it feeds upon, and its very success, if success be achieved, will tend to make it a large and growing scheme. Will my friends who are pressing the question face the financial difficulties involved? (Cheers.) We are now employing an imperial revenue—and I am assuming, first of all, that the State will have to come into this—of over one hundred millions



sterling per annum. Gentlemen, I am not talking the language of the politician when I say that boundless as the resources of this country seem to be it is a mistake to assume that they are boundless or unlimited, and I shall be very glad if any gentleman will point out to me a source of new taxation. Any one can give the income-tax a turn of the screw, but it is a mistake to suppose that the income-tax payers are all millionaires. What about the clerk with an income of £300 a year and a large family to bring up? You can get two millions by a turn of the screw, but there are serious difficulties in the way, and I would like you to consider fairly and squarely where the money is to come from—whether it is to come from imperial or local sources, and the local burdens are already almost unbearable. I shall be glad to hear of a new source of taxation. I have heard the teetotallers quoted as a new source—I object, I am one, and a life one—(cheers)—and I deny that I ought to be taxed for one of the few virtues that I possess. (Cheers and laughter.)

The second point, and I am strictly on the non-committal line yet—(Hear, hear, and laughter)—and I would like my friend Mr Crooks to give some attention to it—he and I know each other pretty well, and I know he does not shirk difficulties—(cheers)—and I understand the feeling of the aged poor against being called upon to accept poor relief—I understand and sympathise with their views. It is very strong, and one of those things you cannot get rid of, and, as I say, I sympathise with it, but “facts are stubborn things,” and I want to know from anybody who will be good enough to tell me, supposing the State, through the County Councils, the District Councils, the Post Office, or any other agency, contributes money to a man who is not earning it, in what way you differentiate between relief given through the Poor Law and relief given in this way. (Hear, hear.) Do not blame me for raising these two questions, because inevitably they will have to be met and faced. I am not so foolish as to say they cannot be met and faced. (Cheers.) Up to the present I have not seen a distinct answer to them. Whatever comes of this question, and we shall be very busy in Parliament with it soon—(cheers)—and Parliament will be very well employed in discussing it, this much I will say, good is bound to come of it. (Cheers.) Because even although it may be impossible at the present time to devise a scheme which is actuarially sound, something will have to be done to make the lot of the necessitous and deserving poor better than it is now, and with that view I am in entire and hearty sympathy in whatever way it is done. It will have to be done in some way, and nothing can be more satisfactory than to find a Conference of this kind, men and women engaged in the administration of the Poor Law—men and women who know what they are talking about, which is more than can be said of many who confer—(laughter)—considering this pressing question which must be solved in the near future. (Cheers.) I hope I have left you in



complete and total ignorance of what my own views are. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr LANSBURY (Poplar) said he would suggest to Mr Russell that there were sources of revenue which might yet be taxed in the shape of mining royalties and the huge ground values of London, which went into the pockets of men like the Duke of Westminster and the Marquis of Salisbury. There were ground landlords of London who could continue to live in affluence and comfort, and it would not be wrong to put a graduated tax upon those gentry. (Cheers and laughter.) The resources of England were not unlimited, but they were used—as Mr Chamberlain once said—and they treasured his words—(Hear, hear, and laughter)—for those who “toil not, neither do they spin,” and he remembered too the doctrine of “ransom.” (Laughter.) What was the difference between pension and out-relief? asked Mr Russell. “How do you differentiate them?” He (Mr Lansbury) did not want to differentiate them. (Cheers.) Public opinion had come to recognise that it was not a disgrace to be impecunious. The School Board had made them a little more logical. Mr Vulliamy, who in time would doubtless receive a pension, could stand up and talk about manly independence and backbone, and so would the working classes when their turn came for pensions. (Cheers.) Mr Vulliamy said that the man might spend his pension in drink. Very well, they would stop his pension and pay the money for his maintenance in the Workhouse instead. (Hear, hear.) Mr Vulliamy said that the State required the best years of a man’s life, so did an employer. (Hear, hear.) The insurance companies charged employers higher rates (under the Employers Liability Act) for old men than for young ones, and the trend of things was to lower the age at which men ceased to be effective workers, and the problem would not be provision at the sixty-fifth year, but probably very much earlier. (Hear, hear.)

Mr TAYLOR (Eton) said that individually the working man was a hard-headed fellow, but in the mass he was apt to be led astray by any quack idea. The State could not provide for the working man better than he could do it for himself, by the benefit societies and the trades unions; but the agricultural labourer could not provide for his old age, and funds must be found. Let them tax the House of Lords! (Laughter.)

Rev. R. H. HART-DAVIS (Henley-on-Thames) said that the friendly societies could not provide old age pensions, and he said that in spite of what they had heard from Mr Vulliamy that the Ipswich Lodge was doing it. The agricultural labourers again could not provide for their old age if they carried out their duties towards their family, their children, and their aged parents, and by the time the children were off his hands the labourer might, if he still had health and strength, do something towards providing for his old age. It was equally impossible for the working man in the town on twenty shillings a week whose position corresponded to that of

the agricultural labourer, to do anything for his old age. He entirely denied the statement of Mr Vulliamy that the majority of the working men provided for their old age. (Hear, hear.) Five shillings a week would be enough to keep an old agricultural labourer. Any one would take him in as a lodger if he had got five shillings a week. The knowledge that provision for his old age was assured would uplift the labourer and make him a better worker than he was at present. (Cheers.) He had had a modest scheme of old age pensions in his own parish for some years to supplement the out-relief allowance. (Cheers.) He hoped that if nothing else was done the agitation would end in the granting of a larger relief to the deserving poor. (Cheers.)

Colonel GRANVILLE BROWNE (Thornbury) said there was general agreement as to the desirability of old age pensions provided they did not injure the friendly societies. The financial aspect of the question was not so much for Guardians as how the scheme could be carried out without doing more harm than good. (Hear, hear.) The agricultural labourers provided against sickness by joining clubs, but many of the old dividing clubs had failed, as dividing clubs were always bound to fail. The best way of dealing with the old age problem would be by supporting the friendly societies. If they were to make an experiment in State Socialism, he hoped it would be in the direction of compelling every man to join the friendly societies. (Hear, hear.) He was not a Socialist, but he believed that a good system of old age pensions would tend to encourage thrift, and to strengthen and consolidate the realm. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. R. S. MITCHISON (Rugby) said it was the most important social problem to be solved, as one reader gave it up and the other argued that State pensions would be absurd on the score of expense. He would have the State enforce the maxim that it was the duty of every one to lay up for themselves against sickness and old age, and it should be the rule that no out-relief should be granted, and every assistance should be rendered to those who had done their best to help themselves by joining clubs. Men could make provision for old age before they got married. Englishmen ought to feel that they were Englishmen, and not like to be pitied and talked about as some people had talked about them that morning. (Laughter.)

Mr WILLINK (Bradfield) said he would be very glad indeed if any way could be found of providing State pensions for old age, but he had come to the clear opinion that it could not be done. He was of the opinion with Dr Cox that the "feeble and *laissez-faire* Commission" had disapproved of the two arguments of which Dr Cox also disapproved. Nobody who was a Guardian could differ from Dr Cox in the wish to do something for the poor. The two main points against a general pension scheme were, first, the almost certain effect on the wages and general position of the



labourer; and secondly, the financial difficulty. When once the system was started, it was a system which was certain to grow, and he did not see how any one could have any idea of the burden which succeeding generations would have to bear if once they started on the slippery slope of old age pensions. (Hear, hear.) The age limit of sixty-five was purely arbitrary, and so was the limit of income for those eligible for pensions. Surely they were going the surest way to lower wages if they subsidised the labourer by State pensions. It was no pleasure to him to stand up and argue against old age pensions, but he believed that there would be no surer way of casting a burden on the country than by establishing them. (Cheers.)

Mr G. E. LLOYD-BAKER (Wheatenhurst) said that the agricultural labourer's wages had risen considerably during the last thirty years, and in his district they were self-respecting and self-reliant. If old age pensions were adopted there would be a weakening of self-reliance and a lowering of the standard of independence. (Hear, hear.)

Rev. J. E. HAND (Whitechapel) said that he believed that the present out-relief policy in Whitechapel would be dropped in the next five or six years. As a new Guardian he was not satisfied that the policy did not result in many of the deserving poor living under conditions of intolerable harshness. (Hear, hear.) About one hundred people in Whitechapel were in receipt of pensions from private sources, but social reformers in Whitechapel would prefer that the pensions should be paid by the State. (Hear, hear.) He did not think from what he knew of the working men in East London that they did spend their money extravagantly in beer and tobacco and amusements. He often had to pay perhaps 8s. 6d. a week for one small room in which to rear his family. A vast number of London working men were engaged in "seasonal" trades, which meant that they would be out of work during some months in each year and could not keep up their contributions to the friendly societies.

Rev. Dr Cox said he wished that his paper had followed Mr Vulliamy's, for he was vain enough to think that it would have been accepted as a complete answer to it. It was rather unworthy of Mr Vulliamy to speak about the workers' beer and 'baccy and amusements. Why should not working men brighten their lives with a little amusement? (Cheers.) Lord Salisbury himself said that the chief need of a village was a circus. (Laughter.) There were very few Guardians who took the extreme line which Mr Vulliamy had taken. (Hear, hear.) As to the twenty millions a year in co-operative enterprises, did not that include the Civil Service Stores and other things that had no connection whatever with the working classes? With regard to what Mr Chance said, nothing could be further from his wish than another Royal Commission. (Hear, hear.) He joined issue with Mr Chance as to the Foresters' new courts, and he did so on the authority of a gentleman who was the editor of



the *Foresters' Magazine*.\* He had the honour of being vice-chairman of the new Poor Law Unions Association, and he had it on the highest authority that the present Government intended to deal with the question of old age pensions before they left office. He was glad Mr Russell had been present, and he would be most grateful to the Government if, with their still magnificent majority, they would have the courage to face the question before appealing to the country. (Cheers.)

Mr VULLIAMY said he strongly objected to Mr Crooks's assertion that he looked down on those in a lower position than himself as the scum of the earth. (Hear, hear.) The twenty millions spoken of were solely for working-class co-operative organisations. (Hear, hear.)

The Conference then adjourned for lunch.

In the afternoon,

Mrs EATON LASCELLES read the following paper :—

## THE BEST METHODS OF STARTING IN LIFE AND CARING FOR POOR LAW BOYS.

BY MRS EATON LASCELLES,

*Secretary to the Association for Befriending Boys.*

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THE training and education of children in Poor Law Schools must surely have in it more of the element of hope for the future than any other department of the work of the Guardians—of hope that these boys and girls, upon whom so much money and thought has been spent, should be raised to a higher level in the social life than that from which they sprang, and thus become self-supporting citizens. Very much depends on their first start in life after they leave the school.

The subject of apprenticing and starting in life of Poor Law boys is one that is now occupying the careful consideration of many of the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians, and it was felt that this Conference afforded a good opportunity for thoroughly discussing the matter.

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\* See note on p. 658, *supra*.

I have come into personal contact during the last thirteen years with a large number of boys—between four and five hundred—from one of our District Schools; I have traced the course of their lives from the age of fourteen or fifteen years up to the present time; and it is the knowledge thus acquired which alone entitles me to speak to you on this subject. I should like to deal with—

*Firstly*, Placing out.

*Secondly*, After-care.

The Pauper Apprenticeship Act of 1844, and the General Consolidated Order of July 1847, with their antiquated provisions, are now, I believe, universally acknowledged to be unsuitable to the conditions of labour at the present time.

An Order of the Local Government Board, issued 15th February 1898, contains the following provision:—

“And whereas by certain Orders we have altered, so far as regards the Unions named in such Orders, the Orders aforesaid, so as to enable us to assent, in any case where it may seem to us necessary or expedient, to a departure from any of the regulations contained in such Orders with regard to the apprenticeship of pauper children;

“And whereas it is expedient that further provision should be made in the matter as hereinafter mentioned;

“Now, therefore, in pursuance of the powers given to us by the statutes in that behalf, we do hereby alter the Orders above referred to, prescribing regulations to be observed with regard to the apprenticeship of pauper children, so as to provide that we may assent, in any case where it may seem to us necessary or expedient, to a departure from any of the regulations contained in the said Orders with regard to the apprenticeship of pauper children.

“And we do hereby rescind the Orders secondly above referred to, except so far as such Orders may have been acted upon.”

This Order appears to make it necessary that application should be made to the Local Government Board in each individual case for permission to modify the requirements of the Act. If this is so, it will be of little practical assistance, for delay would lead in all probability to the loss of the situation, employers not caring to wait long when they have once applied for an apprentice.

A circular letter which was recently issued by the Guardians of the Hunslet Union, Leeds, enclosing a copy of the following resolution, seems to put the matter very fairly :—

“That having regard to the altered condition of the times since the General Consolidated Order of 24th July 1847 was issued, to the inability of the majority of large employers of labour to take indoor apprentices, to the risk of lads going out to work without having a home to go to, and generally to the increasing difficulties of Guardians in large centres of industry in finding situations for friendless lads chargeable to them, this Board is of opinion that the time has arrived when Boards of Guardians should be empowered to bind lads as outdoor apprentices, and to provide and maintain a small Home for their accommodation until able to earn their own livelihood.”

I will not endeavour to point out the causes which have led to the altered condition of the labour market during the last fifty years, but simply state what I believe to be some of the reasons why the present system is, taken as a whole, a failure, and to suggest some alterations for your consideration. The main difficulty in finding a master is that clause in the Act which obliges the employer to “house, feed, and clothe” his apprentice. The better class of tradesmen do not care to undertake this, therefore the employer is usually a man in a small way of business, often not working on his own account. The workroom is small



and its conditions trying to a boy fresh from the out-of-door life of his school. It may happen that the master is not a prosperous man, and glad of the money premium given by the Guardians to help him over a difficult time. This relief is only temporary, and before many months bankruptcy follows, and the boy is turned out to do the best he can. Or, to take another case, the master is just starting in business—he has borrowed money to do so. He too is glad of the premium, though he has not sufficient trade to need an apprentice, and again the result is failure. I am not drawing upon my imagination, I could quote many instances showing the truth of these statements.

In a recent return which I made for the Guardians with whose boys I have been connected, I found that out of one hundred and five boys apprenticed since 1885, taken consecutively, fourteen only have served their whole time, while eighteen are still bound. This surely points to failure of the system, not, I maintain, to failure in life of the boys themselves, for, with few exceptions, those boys are now doing well. If the lad is sharp and ambitious, long before the five years of his binding are over he believes, or fancies, that he has learnt all which his master can teach him, and that he could do better on his own account; and it needs perhaps a stronger sense of honour than the boy possesses to feel that he owes an obligation to his master.

Another objection to the system is, that as the working hours are not regulated, either legally or in the indentures, they are frequently very long, and leave no time for the boy to attend evening classes for self-improvement, or to go a Boys' Club.

I venture to put before you the following suggestions in modification of the existing system:—

1. That the preliminary inquiries should be made with greater care, and, if possible, not by the relieving officer.

2. That the period during which the boy is sent on trial should be extended to two or even three months.

3. That the money premium should be paid in three instalments, extending over two years.

4. That the boy should be interviewed privately by one or two of the Guardians prior to the indentures being signed.

5. That the number of hours daily during which the boy can be employed should be stated in the indentures.

6. That the Superintendent of the school should have a greater share in the choice of the situation, as he knows best the character and capabilities of the boy.

7. That the boy should be allowed to live at a Working Boys' Home, or with respectable relations, going to and from his work.

8. That where a tradesman is willing to take a boy, and to teach him his trade, without binding, and giving him small wages to begin with, the Guardians should supplement his wages up to the age of sixteen, or until he can earn sufficient to provide for himself. I should like to add my hope that eventually no apprentice may be employed at his trade on Sundays.

I pass on to consider other ways in which Poor Law boys are placed out.

Many are sent to Working Boys' Homes, from which situations are found for them. In these Homes, excellent as they are, the boy has a large amount of freedom of action. There is nothing to hinder his leaving whenever he likes; often undesirable relations get hold of him just as he is earning good wages, and has perhaps saved a little money. He is liable to dismissal at any time for misconduct, and compulsorily when he attains the age of eighteen.

The army bands are largely recruited from Poor Law Schools, and as a rule the boys do remark-

ably well. Any one who saw them when on furlough, as I have done, year after year, could not fail to be struck with their fine manly appearance, and the evident pleasure they take in their life. There are now thirteen of my boys in the band of one regiment. Not one of these lads frequents the canteen, and the adjutant's report of each is "perfectly satisfactory."

Many Boards, I believe, consider the army a bad provision for a boy's future life, but if they can be induced to re-enlist after the first twelve years for a further period of nine years, at the end of that time, providing their conduct has been good, they are entitled to a pension of 1s. 8d. a day, and a lump sum large enough to be of material assistance to them. As my experience of these boys only covers a period of thirteen years, I do not know many who have left the army, but of these I believe two are now earning over £2 weekly, and another 25s.

Many boys are sent to the training ship "Exmouth," and if they can pass on into the Royal Navy, remain in it, and are of good character, at the age of thirty-eight they become entitled to a very substantial pension.

Domestic service, as far as its results go, does not appear to me as a rule to succeed, very few boys remaining long in it.

A suggestion, which I thought a valuable one, was made to me the other day, that it would be a good opening for Poor Law boys if they could be employed as telegraph messengers. They could easily pass the required standard, and have the chance before them in the future of becoming telegraph clerks. I would urge upon those who have the responsibility of placing out these boys, that they should be dealt with as individuals, the temperament and early life of each, and, where possible, his own inclinations, taken into consideration; in short, that they should be treated as members of a family—a large family, it is true, but



one in which each has the occupation most suitable chosen for him, and the best chance possible offered to him of getting on in the world.

Before leaving this part of my subject I should like to mention that I entirely disagree with a statement made in a paper read at the South-Eastern Poor Law Conference, 1898, namely, "that it is a well-known fact that when such children" (*i.e.*, Poor Law children) "grow up in England, a large number come back to the Workhouse, especially amongst our girls, and I fear far more than 5 per cent. of our boys drift back into our casual wards as tramps, so that we are constantly bringing up, as it were, a store of persons expensive to the State, useless to the State, dangerous to the State." I have never known a lad drift into a casual ward as a tramp, and it is a very rare thing for one to get into the Workhouse. During the last three or four years, I have only known of a single case, and he, poor fellow, is now in a lunatic asylum. I have had no experience of boys from country or provincial Workhouse Schools, but I feel sure, that the Rev. Brooke Lambert will agree with me that the statement referred to is not borne out by facts as regards Metropolitan Poor Law Schools.

I now pass on to speak of after-care. May I quote the recommendation on this subject given in the report of the Poor Law Schools Committee :—

"That supplementary agencies of a voluntary character, such as the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, the work of Mrs Lascelles, and the scheme established at Sutton, ought, whenever possible, to be extended and encouraged, and to receive due recognition and help from the public authorities concerned."

I have lately received reports from fourteen of the Metropolitan District and separate schools, and I find that 735 boys over the age of fourteen were discharged from those schools between 1st January and 31st

December 1898. It appears, therefore, taking into account the five other schools, that at least 900 young lads are annually launched out into the world from these schools.

Of the 735 referred to—

171 were discharged to friends.

197 were apprenticed to various trades.

126 sent to Working Boys' Homes.

84 entered domestic service, or went to hotels or clubs as pages.

73 enlisted in the army.

82 were sent to the training ship "Exmouth."

2 to the Nottingham School for the Blind.

Whilst in the schools these boys have been taught and trained, and each one, as far as possible, put in the way of earning his own living, and thus becoming an independent member of society; but he is only at the most sixteen years old—he has been watched over, his daily life ordered by rule, and whatever happened, he could feel sure of food to eat, clothes to wear, and a bed to sleep in. Now he has to learn that if a man or a boy "will not work, neither shall he eat"; he has to take the responsibility of life upon his own shoulders; surely he needs some help to keep him straight, a friend to show him how to avoid the many temptations to evil incidental to the life of a boy in London; and it is this help which the Association for Befriending Boys hopes in time to offer to every boy sent out from every Metropolitan Poor Law School.

More than twenty years ago the necessity for this after-care in the case of Poor Law girls was recognised by Mrs Nassau Senior. The result was the formation of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, which at the present time is looking after over 7,000 of these girls, and doing a splendid work amongst them. This work, I feel convinced, is deservedly appreciated by the Metropolitan Boards of

Guardians, but no such organisation has hitherto existed for boys.

The Rev. Brooke Lambert, about six years ago, feeling that boys also needed this care, started, in conjunction with Miss Thompson and Mr Joseph Steer, a very complete system, by which every boy sent out from the South Metropolitan District School, Brighton Road, Sutton, has been visited and reported upon. The results are most satisfactory, as it is found that 81 per cent. are doing well. The North Surrey District School at Anerley carries on a complete system of visitation through the chaplain, who has a separate salary as boys' visitor.

The Lambeth Board of Guardians have appointed a committee of three of their number who visit and look after apprentices, and they are aided in this work by the Sunday school teachers. The supervision of boys from the Kensington and Chelsea District School at Banstead is undertaken by the Kensington Lads' Union, of which, since its formation, I have been Hon. Secretary, and I believe that of those boys, not including those discharged to friends, the proportion who are doing well is about 88 per cent. May I remark, in passing, that the position of an ordinary school is usually judged by the failure or success of its boys in after life, and I do not think, therefore, that the Metropolitan Poor Law Schools need fear the application of such a test. But in this work, as in others, the axiom that "Union is strength" holds good, and if the systematic visitation of boys sent out from Poor Law Schools is to be taken in hand, it can undoubtedly be more efficiently done as a whole, than by each Union undertaking its own boys. If it were the case that boys were only sent to service within the limits of their own Union the case might be different, but, as the lads are scattered far and wide, the difficulty of properly visiting them would be very great.

It will be universally admitted that the period of a



boy's life, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen or twenty, is a critical one, as during that time, more perhaps than at any other, his character is being moulded for good or evil, and this process will be materially affected by his surroundings, and by the influences brought to bear upon him. The aim of the Society is, that not one of these boys shall lack a friend, not as a crutch to lean upon, but as a sympathising adviser to whom he can turn in times of difficulty or trouble, and even when he has fallen into wrong-doing—not so much a friend to help him, as to show him how to help himself.

There are many times, as all who know anything of the life of a working boy will acknowledge, when a little assistance from outside will be of great service. When he is changing his situation, he will need advice as to finding fresh employment, and often a letter of recommendation. When sickness comes, a visit while in Hospital, and a letter for a Convalescent Home, and at all times the knowledge that he has a friend who is interested in his welfare, who would be pained at his misconduct, and to whom he may have recourse in any emergency, must prove a safeguard. That the boys themselves value the interest taken in them I have had abundant and repeated proof.

The Association for Befriending Boys was formally constituted at a meeting held at Sion College, on 12th December 1898. The Chairman is the Rev. Brooke Lambert, and in securing his services it was felt that a great step had been taken towards enlisting the confidence and co-operation of the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians. His powers of organisation, large-minded sympathy with all good work, and the deep interest he takes in the twin Society, the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, are well known to you all.

Each co-operating Board of Guardians has its representative on the General Council, and out of the

fourteen members who compose the Executive Committee, six are Guardians, one has been so until recently, and one is a School Manager.

The Guardians are asked, as they do in the case of the M.A.B.Y.S., to send the names of boys as they are discharged from the schools, to the Secretary, together with certain particulars ; the Society on its part, undertakes to look after and to befriend the boys, and to send half-yearly or yearly reports of them to the Guardians of each Union.

In this way the Guardians will have the satisfaction of knowing the result of the time, trouble, and money which have been expended upon their boys, and the boys themselves will have a greater chance of success in life. If also, and I see no reason to doubt it, the time comes when it can be truthfully asserted that no boy trained in a Poor Law School ever goes back into the Workhouse, you as Guardians will not regret that you gave your sanction, co-operation, and assistance to the Association for Befriending Boys.

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Alderman A. MACDOUGALL (Guardian of the Manchester Union and Chairman of the Swinton Schools Committee) read the following paper on the same subject :—

## BEST METHODS OF STARTING IN LIFE AND CARING FOR POOR LAW BOYS.

BY MR ALDERMAN ALEXANDER M'DOUGALL, J.P.,

*Guardian of the Manchester Union, and Chairman of the Swinton Schools Committee.*

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WHEN asked to prepare a paper on this subject by the Committee of the Conference, I had considerable hesitation in accepting the invitation, because I have very little knowledge of the methods adopted or the results obtained in Rural Unions with reference to youths placed out in situations by the Guardians. My experience does not extend beyond dealing with boys

who have been educated in large Poor Law Schools, at which some amount of training for manual work has been given to the boys in addition to elementary education.

I have only undertaken to put before the Conference some details relating to the placing of boys in situations in large towns and surrounding districts, and to offer some suggestions for increased powers that would meet some difficulties which now arise and remove some obstacles to progress in the betterment of the condition of the boys.

I hope that other members of the Conference will speak during the discussion, on the aspect of the subject which relates to the after-care of boys going out from Rural Unions.

When speaking of boys leaving the Workhouse, it is understood that reference is made only to those who may have been for a considerable time under educational care, and who are, upon arriving at the age, say of fourteen years, mentally and physically capable of work. I do not take into account at all the many boys who come in and go out with parents, or those who are removed by parents before they can have been for a lengthened period under school influences.

Of the boys who attain the age of fourteen, after having been a considerable time in the charge of Guardians, a considerable proportion do not continue under supervision after leaving. They have parents or relatives desirous of claiming them when capable of earning money. Taking the Swinton Schools of the township of Manchester as an example, the number of those who are taken by relatives is about half as many as those for whom the Guardians have to find situations.

There being, as a rule, no visitation by officers of Unions to boys given up to relatives, no reliable comparison can be attempted as to their progress and condition with that of boys who are placed out by



Guardians and regularly visited by officers of the Unions. I have the opinion, gradually formed through many years, that the future of children taken by relatives is much less satisfactory in the majority of cases than that of the children put into situations by Guardians.

Some of the boys taken by relatives go into good surroundings and influences, such as the sons of respectable widows who accept Poor Law relief in the shape of maintenance and education of children, whilst themselves working and earning wages. Examples could be given of boys returning to mothers, obtaining good situations and making excellent progress, in some cases the mothers thus becoming able to cease working for wages and devote themselves to the domestic comfort of their working children. It is one of the satisfactions of the School Committee of the Manchester Board to know that many respectable industrious widows have by entrusting children to the school life at Swinton, been capable of self-support without any other aid from the Guardians, and after the return home of their children at working age, have been able to hold the family together in a way that would have been impossible without the school period for the children.

Such instances are unfortunately somewhat exceptional. A large proportion are children of parents often resorting to the Workhouse, or children brought by relatives or other persons, who, whilst not liable, have taken temporary charge of them. Often when a child has reached working age, parents appear to apply for it, against whom there is no direct evidence for a conviction for neglect or desertion, and whose application cannot be reasonably refused. The prospects for the future of such children are very discouraging. Some are able in spite of bad example and environment to retain self-respect, and become intelligent and trustworthy citizens, but many yield to the disastrous

influences, and never emerge from conditions of idleness and vice. There is no sadder sight than to see a bright healthy child, that has shown aptitude in school, handed over to the tyranny and cupidity of parents who have done nothing for the child for years, but who are eager to make all possible gain from its newly developing capacity for earning money.

I would strongly urge that the power which Guardians now possess of adoption in cases of deserted children be extended to cover cases of children who, for a period of not less than twelve months, have been left in the charge of Guardians. There is no fear that Guardians would without good reason remove children from the control of parents; there is every wish to foster the desire for family life both in parents and children. Such adoption could be rescinded by resolution, and parents or children could have appeal to Magistrates against decisions by Guardians.

Adoption would secure for the children of dissolute and unreliable parents the care in placing out in situations and the oversight now exercised on behalf of orphans or deserted children.

This power of adoption, when obtained, will add to the number of boys for whom situations will need to be found. At present the facilities for obtaining places are too limited. When the numbers of boys are increased, the Guardians will not be able, satisfactorily, to provide for them without extended powers.

The earliest legislation with regard to the placing out of children from Workhouses provides for apprenticeship. The Act of 1601 (43 Eliz., cap. 2, sec. 5) empowered Churchwardens and Overseers with the assent of two Justices to bind children as apprentices, the man-child to the age of twenty-four years, and the woman-child to the age of twenty-one years or the time of her marriage. In 1777 (18 Geo., cap. 47) it was enacted that no man-child should be bound for a longer period, than until he

reaches the age of twenty-one years; and in 1884 (7 & 8 Vict. cap. 101, sec. 12) the powers of Overseers to bind apprentices is transferred to Boards of Guardians, and the assent of Justices dispensed with.

The Consolidated Orders of the Local Government Board contain instructions relating to masters and apprentices with form of indenture to be under the seal of the Board of Guardians issuing it. When good situations can be found with masters willing to further the training and progress of the youths, and at the same time the household life has the right tendency, there cannot be any doubt that apprenticeship is an excellent method of starting boys in life. The difficulty of finding sufficient number of places for indoor apprentices has been increasing for many years, in consequence of the changing conditions of employment in the main industries of the country, and the rapidly extending use of machinery, which have reduced the number of employers in the several trades carrying on business at their places of abode, and who would take apprentices into their households. The growth of large manufacturing establishments has diminished the openings for indoor apprentices, and the restrictions by trades unions upon the proportion of apprentices that may be employed in certain trades has also lessened the opportunities for boys. The Manchester Board of Guardians some years ago could not place more than a portion of their boys as apprentices, and adopted a method which has worked well, and carries out one of the main conditions of the law of apprenticeship, that the boy should live in the house and under the control of the employer. The plan has been that for the boys for whom the usual five years' apprenticeship could not be procured, to allow an agreement to be entered into between a boy and an employer, to hire himself for service in the employer's business for a term of say three years—the



master undertaking to provide maintenance and lodging in his own house, and pay a small but gradually increasing weekly wage in addition to the board. These agreements have been adopted with great advantage. During the past twenty years quite two-thirds of the boys put out by the Manchester Board have been under agreements of this character.

It is a great pleasure to be able to state confidently that the placing out of boys from the Swinton Schools, either by apprenticeship or under agreements, has, on the whole, been very satisfactory. There have been failures, but I do not know that the proportion of those who have become depraved and vicious is any greater than in other classes of society. The great majority of them have become self-supporting, respectable citizens. At the Jubilee celebrations of the Swinton Schools the Guardians were greatly gratified by the presence of more than four hundred old scholars, many of whom came long distances to visit the school of their youth. They were well dressed, well mannered, and well pleased to renew old friendships. It was very evident that they were not ashamed of the school that gave them the start in life.

I am glad to know that other Poor Law Schools can record equally good results ; and that from Unions where children can be sent to public elementary schools as day scholars, the after-life of the great majority of those put out to situations is, on the whole, satisfactory.

The time has, however, come when still greater scope is required in the choice of situations, as it is becoming more and more difficult to obtain places if either indentures or agreements are insisted upon. The increasing competition for work by fairly educated boys from elementary schools, and the growing habit of employers to live away from places of business, render the choice of situations much more restricted. This difficulty is certain to become more

acute as employers become less willing to take their workpeople to live in their homes. The better the situation, in the view of giving a youth good opportunities of training for future employment, the less is the probability that the employer will take a boy into his household. I believe it is now urgently necessary that Guardians should be empowered in cases where it is deemed desirable, to separate the terms of employment from the provision of the home life for the boys.

Working men much more seldom than formerly seek situations for their boys where it will be required that the boys should live with the employers. They indenture them as outdoor apprentices, or for the most part send them to situations occupying the hours of the day, and make other arrangements for home life. In the more laborious occupations, a boy with intelligence and industry has a much better chance of progress when working for an employer at the wages usual for the work done.

In order to separate employment from home life, it will be necessary that Guardians may be able to pay for the part maintenance of a boy during the earlier period of his work, as his wages will not at the commencement be sufficient for his support, and also to be able to arrange that he be placed for his domestic life where he can be controlled in his behaviour with encouragement of and non-interference with his religious faith.

I now submit recommendations which I trust may have the approval of the Conference, and obtain the consent of the Local Government Board.

1. That the powers of adoption be extended to include children who have been left in the charge of Guardians for periods of not less than twelve months, to be exercised in cases where it would be manifestly injurious to give up children to parents claiming them.

2. That power be given to board out children who have been placed in situations at day-work, in suitable

households, the Guardians to pay such portion of the cost of board as may be necessary until the children can earn sufficient for self-support.

3. That Guardians be authorised to pay some portion of the daily cost of maintenance of children placed out at day-work, to Societies undertaking to provide board and lodging for the children—such Societies being within the conditions of the Poor Law Amendment Act (42 & 43 Vict., cap. 54, sec. 10), having for an object “the aiding boys and girls in service.” The children to hand over to the Societies befriending them a regulated portion of the wages earned.

4. That Guardians may be enabled to establish Homes under their own control, and entirely apart from Workhouses, for children sent out to day-work. The children to hand over to the Guardians a regulated portion of the wages earned.

There can be no hesitation about the first recommendation, on the ground of danger of entrusting Guardians with the power of adoption. It is impossible to conceive that it would be exercised in any cases but those of children whose chargeability arose from wilfully improper conduct on the part of parents, and also when desirable in cases of orphan children. The act of adoption would be promptly rescinded when good reason could be shown.

The principle of the second recommendation has occasionally been acted upon by benevolent persons on behalf of children leaving school, in whom they have become interested. A late member of the Manchester Board obtained a situation for a boy at day-work, in which there was good prospect of advancement if the boy proved to be industrious and reliable. The employer took none of his workpeople to live in his house. The gentleman found safe and comfortable lodgings, and paid a portion of the cost of the boy's board until the earnings were sufficient.

The same gentleman, encouraged by the result, ob-



tained a situation for a second boy, and found him a suitable home, and paid part of the cost. This boy did very well, and being a fair musician, and having whilst at the Swinton Schools been a willing member of the instrumental band, had a strong desire to join a military band. The following letter, written during the last few weeks, to the Master of the Schools, is worth recording, as it evinces the attachment of the boy to the Master, and how he wished to be guided by friendly advice as to his future career :—

DEAR SIR,—I write these few lines to tell you that I am going to enlist into an army band if I can. I don't want to run away from my shop, and I want you and my master to know what I want. I have got a good home and shop, but I have put my heart into the band for the past four years. I told teachers at school that I wanted to be a soldier, and was always practising drill when I could. Dear sir, I don't want to go against your consent, but please don't refuse if I ask you for your assistance.

With kindest and best regards to the Matron and yourself, I remain, your affectionate scholar,

T. M.

Mr BIRKBY,  
Swinton Schools.

Since the above letter was received the Master has had a letter from a young man occupying a responsible position—who was educated at the schools—and was at the age of fourteen apprenticed to a hairdresser. His employer after some time sought to return him, and the Guardians, believing that the boy intended to do well, other work was found for him ; the results have been most satisfactory. His letter is to ask the Master to help him to trace a younger brother whom he has never seen, but, being now well-to-do, he is anxious to find this brother if alive. He encloses money for cost of certificates of birth, and recalls himself to the Master by saying, “ You will see by the books that I was returned in ten weeks after I went to my first place, and my master told the Guardians that I should make more of a prize-fighter than a barber. It was a good place, but I was young and foolish then. Again thanking

you for the kind interest you have taken in my inquiries, and hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you personally some time during the coming summer, I beg to remain, yours faithfully,  
J. Y."

The tone of these letters show how advantageous it is that boys should have the confidence that their progress after leaving school is a matter of much interest to those who had the charge of their education.

The Local Government Board have already admitted the principle of Guardians supplementing the wages of apprentices in order that suitable lodgings may be obtained for them. The Guardians of the Prescot Union received on 11th April 1898 an official communication, in which the following sentence occurs :—

"With regard to the suggestion that the boys who may be apprenticed at the age of fourteen, should receive from the Guardians, in addition to the wages that may be paid to them by the persons to whom they are apprenticed, a certain weekly sum in the first, or perhaps the first and second years of service, in lieu of the payment to the employer of a premium, in consideration of his undertaking the instruction and maintenance of the apprentice, the Local Government Board will not offer any objection to such a proposal. It will be necessary, however, for the Guardians to satisfy themselves that the amount allowed by them will, with the weekly wage paid by the master, be adequate to provide for the maintenance and clothing of the boy either alone or in association with other boys."

If this permission be extended to cases of boys who are not apprentices, but placed by Guardians in suitable situations at day-work, it will advantageously widen the sphere of valuable openings for boys.

Experience has demonstrated the usefulness of the third recommendation. The Select Vestry of Liver-

pool have for some years, by arrangement with the authorities of "Working Boys' Homes" in Liverpool, sent numbers of boys in situations, found for them in and near the city, to live at the Homes, where they are provided with lodging, clothing, and maintenance. The boys hand over their wages to the institution, a small weekly sum for pocket money being returned to them. The Select Vestry have, with the concurrence of the Local Government Board, made yearly donations to the funds of the Homes.

The Manchester Board have sent boys going out to day-work to a Boys' Home in the city with useful results; in fact but for this method of providing for their lodgment and board, many boys must have been left without situations, employment as apprentices or under agreements could not be obtained for all boys ready for work. The Local Government Board have authorised contributions to the funds of the Home.

I trust that the Conference will give such approval of this arrangement as one useful method of dealing with working boys—that the Local Government Board may announce that if satisfied that the boys are being well cared for and aided, Guardians may make payments toward the cost of maintenance of boys sent by them to Protestant or Roman Catholic Homes.

The fourth recommendation, that for the establishment of Homes by Guardians, has not been acted upon, and is perhaps only desirable after other methods have been exhausted. It may yet be found to be wise economy for Unions in populous districts to combine for the purposes of such Homes. The Hunslet Board have lately passed a resolution, seeking powers to permit such a Home as now recommended. It is as follows:—

"That having regard to the altered conditions of the times, since the General Consolidated Order of 24th July 1847 was issued, to the inability of the



majority of large employers of labour to take indoor apprentices, to the preference of small employers for outdoor apprentices, to the risk of lads going out to work without having a home to go to, and generally to the increasing difficulties of Guardians in large centres of industry in finding situations for friendless lads chargeable to them, this Board is of opinion that the time has arrived when Boards of Guardians should be empowered to bind lads as outdoor apprentices, and to provide and maintain a small Home for their accommodation until able to earn their own livelihood."

Whatever may be the method of placing out boys, and however they may be lodged, I would earnestly advise that the periodical visitation by officers of the Guardians be continued. The regular visitation helps much to mitigate difficulties whilst the boys become accustomed to their work. It is sometimes the case that the first situation to which a boy is sent is not one for which he is suited; but the knowledge gained by the visiting officer enables the Guardians to place him where his temperament and capabilities may be usefully developed. A judicious and painstaking visitor is of much service in sustaining good relations between master and boy; in many cases he secures the confidence of both.

It would needlessly detain the Conference to mention other ways of dealing with boys leaving the Union, such as sending them to training ships to be prepared for the Royal Navy or mercantile marine service; also apprenticeships to owners of fishing smacks. The advantages for certain boys are well known and for them are probably the best openings that can be selected; but no one would urge that a boy should be trained for the sea, unless he had a strong and real desire to be a sailor.

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## DISCUSSION.

Mr HERRIGAN (Liverpool) said he could supplement the paper with a few further details. Like most other Boards of Guardians in the country, they had experienced great difficulty in satisfactorily placing their boys in situations. Until the last few years they had had only the fisheries, mines, and emigration as openings for employment. Those who had had longer experience of the Poor Law work than himself could realise the disadvantages of those three avenues. Fortunately for Liverpool the Working Lads Home was started, and it had almost solved the difficulty for them. (Hear, hear.) During four years the Guardians had sent roughly one hundred boys there, of whom thirty were still in the Home. With the approval of the Local Government Board the Guardians contributed a sum equivalent to about half a crown a week for each boy, and provided them with an outfit costing about £2. The boys were found suitable situations in Liverpool, and in nearly every instance they were going along splendidly. (Hear, hear.) There was one Home for the Protestant boys and one for the Roman Catholics. The Homes were handsomely fitted up, and the boys had all sorts of recreation, so there was no wish to roam the streets. The boys had done exceedingly well, and one or two of the earliest of them had succeeded well enough to settle down and marry. (Hear, hear.)

Mr EASTMAN (Sculcoates) said he was deeply interested in the papers, having been a Poor Law boy himself in the very Union that he represented there that day. (Hear, hear.) The bitter experience he went through as a child made him resolve to do whatever he could to give others a better chance than he had. (Cheers.) Amongst other things his Board had done was to take advantage of the Order issued by the Local Government Board enabling them to vary the terms of the old Apprenticeship Act. The Guardians now allowed a boy 5s. a week the first year of his apprenticeship, the master having to pay 4s.; in the second year the Guardians gave 4s. and the master 5s.; in the third and subsequent years the scale was adjusted on the principle that the apprentice should receive a total of 9s. a week. Where his Board wished to do anything contrary to the orders of the Local Government Board they did it first and asked permission afterwards. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) And to the credit of the Local Government Board, and they deserved a little credit, in no single instance had permission been withheld. (Hear, hear.) The Guardians had been able to start boys who were now carrying everything before them in the municipal and technical schools, and their success fully repaid for all the time and trouble bestowed on them. (Hear, hear.) The great thing to aim at in dealing with the children was to see that there was on every Board some kind Christ-like heart who would deal with the young as the Master who loved the children would have them to do. (Cheers.)

Mrs MATILDA EVANS (Strand) said she had heard the



papers with the greatest satisfaction, because she was at the initial meeting two years ago when the matter was discussed at Miss Mason's house. The children, if they were left to the care of the unfortunate beings who brought them into the world, would most assuredly follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and therefore it was a grand idea to form a society for the boys which should emulate the good work done for the girls. There was a good deal of trouble in the apprenticeship and care of boys in most places, but in the Strand they had not enough to fill the various situations offered them. The Union, too, having an exceedingly able bandmaster, formerly of the 1st Life Guards, had been remarkably successful in getting boys into the army bands, five of the boys having risen to be bandmasters of regiments. (Cheers.) The Local Government Board had always taken an enlightened view as to what premium should be paid for apprenticing the children, who had invariably done well in the world. (Hear, hear.) She wished the Boys' Society and the M.A.B.Y.S. God-speed. (Cheers.)

Hon. Mrs CROPPER (Kendal) said there were only nine boys in that Union, although it included the town of Kendal. Their search for situations generally ended in the boys going out to farm service, which was very rough for them, and they were usually fit for something a great deal better. She was delighted to find a growing desire to look after the boys better. It should be a voluntary work, and the children should feel that it was a work of love, and not for the sake of remuneration, by real friends. (Hear, hear.) She hoped there would be more and more associations formed for that purpose. At Nottingham there was an association founded by Miss Mason in 1882, and the Guardians subscribed to it with the consent of the Local Government Board. The associations should be joined together by a network all over the country, so that children could be passed from one to another like the M.A.B.Y.S. There were many warm-hearted men who would gladly do for the boys what the M.A.B.Y.S. and the Girls' Friendly Society were doing for the girls. (Hear, hear.)

Miss GRAFTON (Head of the G.W.O. Department of the Girls Friendly Society) said that the great difficulty in placing the boys was to get them suitable lodgings, and this could only be got over by finding local people who would take a kindly interest in them.

Rev. C. E. FEW (Sevenoaks) said they wished the readers of the papers all success in the good work they were doing, and they thanked Mr Eastman for coming and giving them an object-lesson in what a Poor Law child could achieve. (Cheers.) One of the boys from his own Union entered the army, and rose from the ranks to the command of a cavalry regiment. (Hear, hear.) It depended a great deal on the character of the Master and Matron. He wished that greater facilities could be afforded for the education of the children in his own district. The overcrowded state of the local elementary schools prevented the Guardians from doing what was



best for the Poor Law children, sending them to mix with the children of the general public.

Mr MILLIGAN (Wandsworth and Clapham) said that as a manager of sixteen or seventeen years' standing of the North Surrey District Schools, he wished to express his obligation to Mr M'Dougall for having said so many kind things about the much-abused Barrack Schools. In his own experience they found no difficulty in placing the children in satisfactory situations, and the Local Government Board, for which he had the greatest respect, always willingly assented to the payment of an increased premium in special cases. (Hear, hear.) He wished the new society for boys every success. (Cheers.)

Rev. F. FRENCH (Hoxne) deplored rural depopulation, and attributed it to the fact that children now received a commercial and not an agricultural education. He appealed to Guardians and others to draft children into the country districts for work.

Mr CHANCE (Hon. Sec.) said that the problem they were discussing that afternoon was more one for the town than the country. It was desirable that the children should be frequently visited after getting into situations, not by the relieving officers, but by voluntary helpers. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that the Boys' Society would have as great a measure of success as the M.A.B.Y.S. He believed that the majority of the Poor Law boys did well in after life, but the new society would be able to give systematic and reliable data on the subject. (Hear, hear.)

Dr RHODES proposed a vote of thanks to the Earl Beauchamp for his conduct in the chair. He was sure that he was only expressing the feelings of the Conference when he wished the noble Earl God-speed in the new work he had undertaken, and assured him that on his return six years hence he would have a warmer welcome from no class in England than he would have from Guardians. He trusted that at many future Conferences they would see Earl Beauchamp in the chair. (Cheers.)

Rev. Dr COX said he had the honour of seconding the vote of thanks, and did so with the utmost pleasure, cordially re-echoing the remarks of Dr Rhodes. He felt more than ever at the close of the two days' Conference in reference to the noble Earl's approaching departure, that what would be New South Wales's gain would be England's loss. (Cheers.)

The EARL BEAUCHAMP said it had been a real pleasure to him to be present, and to think that it had been a useful Conference. He was sure they would wish him to say one word on their behalf to the readers of the papers. The papers had all been marked by high ability, and had contributed not a little to the success of the Conference. (Cheers.)

The proceedings then terminated.

## RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT CONFERENCES HELD IN THE YEAR 1898-99.

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### CHILDREN—IMBECILE AND FEEBLE-MINDED.

“That in the opinion of this Conference it is imperative that special provision should be made for the treatment of pauper imbecile and feeble-minded children; it believes that one or more central institutions should be provided for the South-Western Poor Law District; and it decides that each Board of Guardians included in the district shall be invited to say if it is willing to join in any well-considered scheme for the attainment of this result.”

*South-Western Conference.*

### INDOOR POOR—IMBECILES AND EPILEPTICS.

“That in the opinion of this Conference the time has come when the Local Government Board should institute a general inquiry as to the best methods of dealing with imbecile and epileptic indoor poor, and that a deputation be appointed to wait upon the Board to request them to take steps to carry out the wishes of the Conference.”

*North-Western Conference.*

### VAGRANCY.

“That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that all Unions should enforce the rule of two nights’ detention for casual paupers, believing as it does that it has proved a satisfactory means of decreasing the number of tramps.”

*South-Western Conference.*

### VAGRANCY AND RESERVE PAY.

“That having regard to the large number of Army Reserve men and pensioners who become vagrants, this Conference hopes that the Government will consider the question of issuing reserve pay and pensions at more frequent intervals than at present, if possible weekly, perhaps through the medium of the Post Office.”

*West Midland Conference.*

### WORKHOUSE NURSING.

“That the Local Government Board be urged to amend Article III. of the Order of 29th September 1897, by adding after the word ‘Infirmary’ (Section 3) the words ‘containing not less than two hundred beds,’ and by substituting the words ‘Resident Physician or House Surgeon’ for the words ‘Visiting Medical Officer.’”

*West Midland Conference.*

SUBJECTS SUGGESTED FOR DISCUSSION AT DISTRICT POOR LAW  
CONFERENCES DURING THE YEAR 1899-1900.

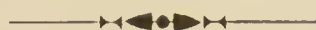
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1. Codification of the Poor Law.
2. Local Taxation Report.
3. Poor Law Administration in Scotland and England.
4. Vagrancy.
5. Vagrants' Children.
6. Has the Time Come for a New Poor Law Inquiry?
7. Workhouse Dietaries.
8. Increase of Pauper Lunatics.
9. Increased Powers of Detention.
10. Differentiation in the Treatment of Indoor Cases.
11. Increased Powers of Detention for the Feeble-Minded.
12. Tasks and Employment in Workhouses.





# Central Committee of Poor Law Conferences.



This Committee consists of three representatives annually elected by each of the District Poor Law Conferences in England and Wales, and of certain additional members co-opted by the elected members, but not to exceed in number more than one-third of the number of elected representatives.

The co-opted members are appointed for two years, one-half of them to retire by rotation in each year, but to be eligible for re-election.

The following are the Committee and its Officers:—

*Chairman and Hon. Treasurer*—Mr W. BOUSFIELD, 20 Hyde Park Gate, S.W.

*Vice-Chairman*—Dr J. M. RHODES, Ivy Lodge, Didsbury.

*Hon. Secretary*—Mr W. CHANCE, Orchards, near Godalming.

*Assistant Secretary*—Mr D. P. MURRAY, 149 Strand, W.C.

## ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES.

### 1. Metropolitan and (2.) South-Eastern Districts—

Rev. C. E. FEW, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Mr D. MILLIGAN, 21 Spencer Road, New Wandsworth, S.W.

Mr H. G. WILLINK, Hillfields, Reading.

### 3. South Midland District—

Rev. Dr J. C. COX, Holdenby Rectory, Northampton.

Mr ALBERT PELL, LL.D., Haselbeach, Northampton.

Mr ARTHUR SPERLING, Lattenbury Hall, St Ives.

### 4. Eastern District—

Mr T. COZENS-HARDY, Oak Lodge, Sprowston, Norwich.

Rev. J. H. HOCKING, Copdock, Ipswich.

Alderman J. WICKS, Colchester.

### 5. South-Western District—

Mr E. H. CLUTTERBUCK, Hardenhuish Park, Chippenham.

Mr AUSTIN J. KING, 13 Queen Square, Bath.

Mr J. W. SPEAR, Eastcott, near Tavistock.

### 6. West Midland District—

Rev. G. DAVENPORT, Foxley, Hereford.

Mr C. A. R. BOUGHTON KNIGHT, Overton, Ludlow.

Mr G. E. LLOYD-BAKER, Hardwicke Court, Gloucester.

### 7. North Midland District—

Mr ARTHUR ANDREW, Iveyholme, New Walk, Leicester.

Rev. Canon DENTON, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Mr R. J. HANSON, Cloverlands, Kimberley, Notts.

### 8. North-Western District—

Mr H. J. HAGGER, Vestry Hall, Liverpool.

Rev. Canon H. A. HIGNETT, Ringway, Altrincham.

Dr J. MILSON RHODES, Ivy Lodge, Didsbury.

### 9. Yorkshire District—

Rev. G. F. ASPINALL, Hall Ings, Southowram, Halifax.

Mr C. FITTON, Bay Hall, Huddersfield.

Mr E. E. LAWSON, 2 Virginia Road, Leeds,

## 10. Northern District—

Mr JOHN BEATTIE, 5 Summerhill Grove, Newcastle.  
Mr GEORGE CRAIGHILL, Guardians' Offices, Gateshead..  
Hon. Mrs CROPPER, Tolson Hall, Kendal.

## 11. South Wales District—

Mr F. J. BEAVAN, Canton, Cardiff.  
• Mr H. HERBERT, Bryn Marles, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire.  
Rev. RHYS JONES LLOYD, Throedyrwyr, Newcastle-in-Emlyn.

## 12. North Wales District—

Capt. B. T. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN, Trevalyn Hall, Wrexham.  
Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS, The Grove, Holywell.  
Mr HUGH THOMAS, Froneirion, Llandegfan, Anglesey.

## CO-OPTATED MEMBERS.

Mr W. BOUSFIELD, 20 Hyde Park Gate, S.W.  
Rev. Canon BURY, Harleston, Northampton.  
Miss M. CLIFFORD, Redland Green, Bristol.  
Sir J. T. HIBBERT, K.C.B., Hampsfield, Grange-over-Sands.  
Mr R. A. LEACH, Rochdale.  
Mr H. J. MANTON, Westfield Road, Birmingham.  
Miss AGATHA STACEY, 30 Calthorpe Road, Birmingham.  
Hon. F. STRUTT, Milford House, Derby.  
Mr W. VALLANCE, Vallance Road, Whitechapel, E.  
Mr A. F. VULLIAMY, 20 Upper Brook Street, Ipswich.  
Mr JOHN WHITTAKER, Woodlands, Nelson, Lancashire.

## DISTRICT COMMITTEES.

### 1. Metropolitan and (2.) South-Eastern (combined), 128 Unions.

(*South-Eastern Conference first met, 1870. 98 Unions.*)

W. BOUSFIELD, Esq., *President.*

Sir JOHN F. LENNARD, Bart., Wickham Court, Beckenham, } *Vice-*  
Mr JAMES BROWN, 43 Lexham Gardens, S.W., } *Presidents*  
Mr W. CHANCE, Orchards, near Godalming, *Hon. Secretary.*

*Berks*.....Mr J. P. KING, North Stoke, Wallingford.  
                  Mr A. TULL, Crookham House, Newbury.  
                  Mr H. G. WILLINK, Hillfields, Reading.  
*Hants*.....Mr W. HOLDING, Burghclere Manor, Newbury.  
                  Mr F. M. E. JERVOISE, Herriard Park, Basingstoke.  
                  Mr H. PALIN, Portsmouth.  
*Kent*.....Rev. C. E. FEW, Sevenoaks, Kent.  
                  Mr JESSE HAWKES, Gwelo, London Road, Maidstone.  
                  Mr W. J. MITCHELL, Faversham.  
*Surrey*.....Mr W. BRAVINGTON, Addlestone.  
                  Rev. Canon PHILLIPS, Stoke d'Abernon.  
                  Colonel SPARKS, Richmond.  
*Sussex*.....Miss BRODIE HALL, Eastbourne.  
                  Rev. R. P. HOOPER, 31 Cambridge Road, Brighton.  
                  Mr F. TUPPENNEY, Hastings.  
*Metropolis*.....Mr W. CROOKS, 28 Northumberland Street, Poplar, E.  
                  Mr J. O'CONNOR, 37 Galt Street, Limehouse, E.  
                  Mr W. VALLANCE, Vallance Road, Whitechapel,

*Co-optated Members.*

Miss BAKER, 37 Brooke Street, London, E.C.  
Miss COWIE, St Gabriel's House, London Docks, E.  
Hon. Mrs CHARLES EGERTON, The Banks, Robertsbridge, Sussex.  
General Sir W. S. HAMILTON, Bart., Woodgate, Horsham.  
Mr MORTON LATHOM, Hollow Dene, Frensham, Surrey.  
Mr C. N. NICHOLSON, 35 Harrington Gardens, S.W.

**3. South Midland.** 64 Unions (First met, 1876).

Mr A. J. PELL, Wilburton Manor, Ely, *Hon. Secretary.*

*Committee.*

*Bedford* ..... Mr A. PEILE, Bedford.  
*Buckingham* ..... Mr JOHN TREADWELL, Upper Winchendon, Aylesbury.  
*Cambridge* ..... Mr ARTHUR SPERLING, Lattenbury Hall, St Ives.  
*Hertford* ..... Rev. P. E. S. HOLLAND, Hoddesdon, Herts.  
*Huntingdon* ..... Mr G. J. RUST, The Views, Huntingdon.  
*Middlesex* ..... Rev. JAMES BOTTERELL, Grove Villa, Wood Green, N.  
*Northampton* ..... Rev. Canon BURY, Harleston, Northampton.  
*Oxford* ..... Mr W. H. ASHURST, Waterstock, Oxford.

**4. Eastern.** 56 Unions (First met, 1872).

Mr A. F. VULLIAMY, 20 Upper Brook Street, Ipswich, *Hon. Secretary.*  
The Committee consists of one Delegate from each Union.

**5. South-Western.** 79 Unions (First met, 1872).

Lord EDMOND FITZMAURICE, *President.*  
Mr CECIL R. M. CLAPP, 2 Bedford Circus, Exeter, *Hon. Secretary.*

*Committee.*

*Cornwall* ..... Mr T. WEBBER, Falmouth.  
*Devon* ..... Mr A. H. A. HAMILTON, Fairfield Lodge, Exeter.  
*Dorset* ..... Mr H. H. PALAIRET, Cattistock Lodge, Dorchester.  
*Somerset* ..... Mr HUNTLEY THRING, Wincanton.  
*Wilts* ..... Mrs FULLER, Neston Park, Corsham.

**6. West Midland.** 82 Unions (First met, 1868).

Mr GRANVILLE E. LLOYD-BAKER, Hardwicke Court, Gloucester,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

*Committee.*

*Gloucester* ..... Mr E. W. CRIPPS, Ampney Park, Cirencester.  
*Hereford* ..... Rev. G. DAVENPORT, Foxley, Hereford.  
*Salop* ..... Rev. A. KINGSFORD, Atcham, Shrewsbury.  
*Stafford* ..... Mr S. HIGGOTT, Burton-on-Trent.  
*Warwick* ..... Mr H. STEPHENS, Clarendon House, Coventry,  
*Worcester* ..... Mr F. S. FALLOWS, 19 Calthorpe Road, Birmingham,  
*Birmingham* ..... Mr W. BOWEN, Birmingham.  
*Bristol* ..... Major RUMSEY, Bristol,



**7. North Midland.** 45 Unions (First met, 1875).

DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G., *President*.  
Hon. F. STRUTT, Milford House, Derby, *Hon. Secretary*.

*Committee.*

*Derbyshire*.....Mr J. L. P. BARBER, Stanton House, Burton-on-Trent.  
Mr EDWIN CANNER, Stanley Grange, Derby.  
Mr J. T. GEE, The Ashes, Hayfield, Stockport.  
Mr EDWARD SLACK, Allen Hill, Matlock.  
*Leicestershire*.....Rev. C. E. DANBY, Market Harborough.  
Mr D. G. HOLLAND, Leicester.  
Mr J. NORTH, Leicester.  
*Lincolnshire*.....Mr EDWIN PRATT, Clarence House, Lincoln.  
*Notts*.....Mr W. H. MASON, Moreton Hall, Retford.

**8. North-Western.** 42 Unions (First met, 1875).

Right Hon. Sir J. T. HIBBERT, K.C.B., Grange-over-Sands,  
Carnforth, *President*.

Mr H. J. HAGGER, Vestry Hall, Liverpool, *Hon. Secretary*.

(There is no Committee, but a preliminary Conference is held each year to settle all the arrangements for the Conference.)

**9. Yorkshire.** 61 Unions (First met, 1876).

Sir F. S. POWELL, Bart., M.P., *President*.

Mr A. T. LONGBOTHAM, 4 Carlton Street, Halifax, *Hon. Secretary*.

The Committee consists of the Chairmen and Clerks of the following Unions:—  
Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Huddersfield, Kingston-upon-Hull, Leeds, North  
Bierley, Sheffield, Wakefield, and York.

**10. Northern.** 39 Unions (First met, 1872).

Mr JAMES CROPPER, Ellergreen, Kendal, *President*.

Mr C. B. P. BOSANQUET, Rock Hall, Alnwick, *Hon. Secretary*.

Mr J. W. GIBSON, Guardians' Offices, Newcastle, *Treasurer*.

*Committee.*

*Cumberland*.....Mrs CHALKER, 8 George Street, Carlisle.  
Rev. A. F. CURWEN, Harrington Rectory.  
Mr J. M. RIDLEY, Walwick Hall, Humshaugh-on-Tyne.  
*Durham*.....Mr E. J. J. BROWELL, Boldon House, South Shields.  
Mr GEORGE CRAIGHILL, Avondale Terrace, Gateshead-on-Tyne.  
Mr R. PEVERELL, South Church, Bishop Auckland.  
*Northumberland*. Mr J. H. RODGERS, Newcastle.  
Mr C. B. P. BOSANQUET, Rock Hall, Alnwick.  
Mr J. ESKDALE, Tynemouth.  
Alderman SPENCE, Chirton Cottage, North Shields.  
Rev. Canon WALKER, Whalton Rectory, Newcastle.  
*Westmorland*.....Mr JAMES CROPPER, Ellergreen, Kendal.  
Mrs LLOYD WILSON, Westworth, Cockermouth.

**11. South Wales.** 33 Unions (First met, 1873).

Mr E. POWELL, Water Street, Neath, *Hon. Secretary*.

**12. North Wales.** 19 Unions (First met, 1877).

Mr P. HARDING ROBERTS, Holywell, *Hon. Secretary*.

The Committee consists of the Chairmen of all Boards of Guardians in the District.











